

THE UK'S BEST SELLING TATTOO MAGAZINE

skin deep



In our continuing digging into NY INK, this issue we bring you an exclusive with
THE VERY SPECIAL MEGAN MASSACRE

We also have something totally out of this world from the camera of
DIRK BEHLAU

In another major world exclusive, **FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND** and **BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE** stopped by the **BRIDGEND TATTOO STUDIO** while we were there. Pretty cool, huh?

Later, we also shot over to a rather peculiar expo at the **SACRED GALLERY** in New York with artist **DAVE DEVRIES**

Then we went and threw spotlights on the talents of **CHANTALE COADY** at Electric Vintage and Bavaria's **FLORIAN KARG**.

Hot in the City

ALSO...

NEWS FROM
THE GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW

ISSUE 212 • JULY 2012 • £4.25



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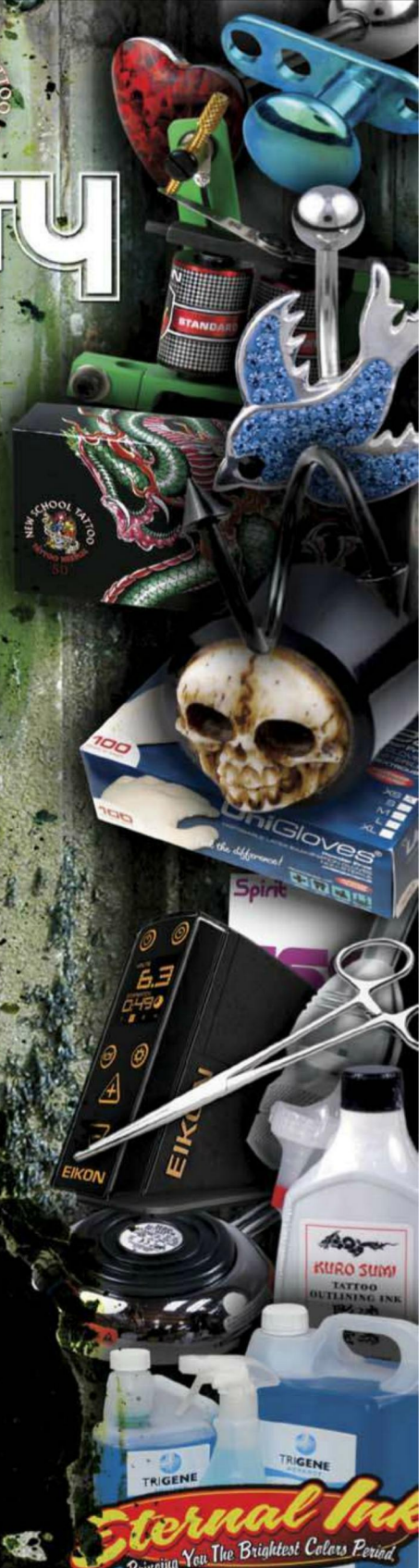
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The needle has landed



Dirk Behlau

18 ACRES OF HELL

For reasons best unknown – or rather best kept to myself – on my bookshelves at home, I have dozens upon dozens of books on monsters. It probably extends well into the hundreds but I've never really counted them – and neither are they in alphabetical order. Always beware of any friends you have that keep anything in alphabetical order. It's a sure sign that they seek control and order in a world in which there is none to be had. Despite my scattergun approach to a 'library', I can lay my hands on anything I want at any given time because, shockingly, I can remember where I put it. To keep things alphabetically arranged reeks of somebody far too concerned with keeping what they have instead of moving on and discovering pastures new.

Over the last couple of weeks, doing some pre-show promo for the Great British Tattoo Show, I had cause to speak to some journalists outside of 'the game' that work in the national press. These are great examples of alphabetical people. Despite my own desire to educate

on the side of the art wherever possible, I was continually met with the same questions and trains of thought from them; "how much is the tattoo industry worth?", "how many people are tattooed in the UK right now?", "are tattoos becoming more middle class?" and most infuriatingly, "can you put me in touch with a tattoo artist who has tattooed somebody famous?" No matter how hard you push

JOURNALISM WAS ONCE THE DOMAIN OF THOSE WHO LOVED THE CRAFT OF WRITING AND REPORTING REAL NEWS, BUT NOW, IT IS SIMPLY THE DOMAIN OF PHONE HACKERS, LIARS AND PUPPETS WITH THE MORALS OF A HYDRA

the insane levels of art we have in tattoo, they just don't want to listen. Thus, if you don't want to listen, you will find I have nothing to say. That's a fair exchange.

In the case of the first and second questions, being persistently badgered to come up with concretely sourced statistics to back up my ballpark figures fell on deaf ears. I don't know and more to the point, it's not important. It's like asking how many people in the UK walked by

a river this morning. Hey, here's a great idea to top them all; let's take the fun out of everything in life by cataloguing it and revealing the magician's tricks because we are unable to find the words to describe it properly. This is inevitably what happens when art clashes with the 'mainstream'.

On the third question, nobody cares about that either. I threw the question back into the arena,

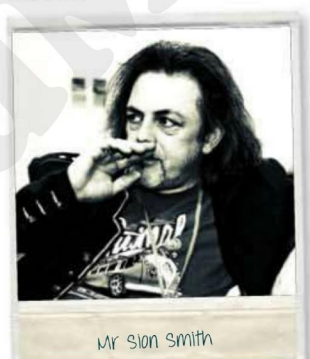
suggesting that the nations media should perhaps a) examine whether or not a 'middle class' still exists these days, and b) why is it important to them? What exactly are they trying to protect with their university degrees in 'journalism'? And as for the celebrity side of things, I would be OK with that if it actually had any positive grounding, but somehow they always seem to get a knife between the ribs when discussing it.

That's the mainstream media

in the UK for you. It likes to bandy around the phrase 'the domain of convicts, sailors and hookers' about tattoo a little too often for my liking. I have a new one for you: "Journalism was once the domain of those who loved the craft of writing and reporting real news, but now, it is simply the domain of phone hackers, liars and puppets with the morals of a Hydra."

There you go. See how you like being tarred with a very large brush. You created the monster, not us. Don't think that what you're doing is important just because you're wearing a tie.

Sen



Mr Slon Smith

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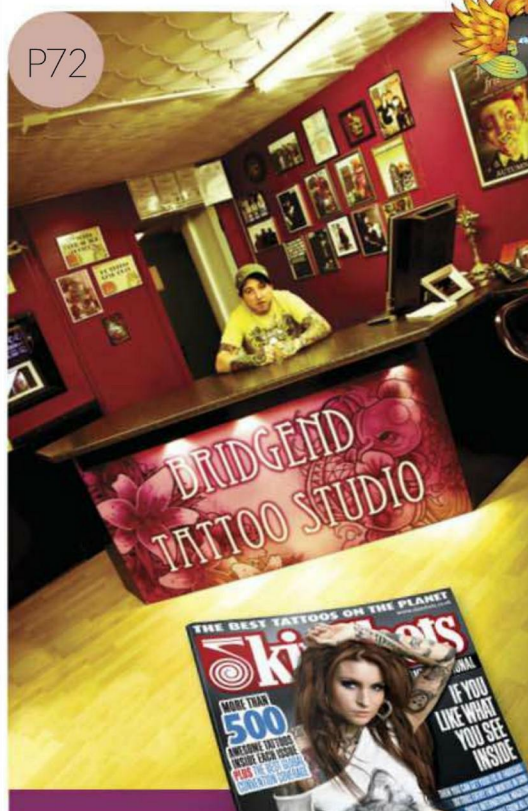
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THIS MONTH'S SUPPLEMENT
SKIN SHOTS ISSUE 81 TASTER

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NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE.



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magazines@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01778 392086

PRINTING
Warners Midlands plc

Having trouble finding Skin Deep magazine in your newsagent? Please contact our distribution company for your nearest outlet 0207 429 4073.

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Sleeve Notes

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ALL SUBMISSIONS TO SLEEVE NOTES GRATEFULLY RECEIVED. BE IT NEWS, AN EVENT, NEW MERCH, A STUDIO MOVE... WE'LL DO OUR VERY BEST TO LET EVERYBODY ELSE KNOW ABOUT IT TOO. EMAIL: EDITOR@SKINDEEP.CO.UK OR IF YOU WANT TO BE ARCHAIC ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR: SKIN DEEP, 1 MARCHER COURT, SEALAND ROAD, CHESTER CH1 6BS. BRING IT.



NIGHTMARE SHIRTS

In keeping with trying to get you looking your best over the last few months, check out these new designs from Akumu Ink.

It all started in a humble two-bed apartment, when Joey and Aldora decided to print T-shirts themselves with small hobby-quality machines in a spare room. Joey is the artist behind all the dark art, while Aldora manages the business aspects of the company.

'Akumu' means nightmare in Japanese, which is reflected in each design sketched out onto paper, and then etched into a final shirt design. The designs are heavily inspired by everything coming from Japan, from its terrifying horror movies to its cute pop icons. Some of the artwork is also inspired by classic stories like *Alice in Wonderland* depicting the White Rabbit falling down an endless pit, and a version of the Mad Hatter who is still celebrating unbirthdays in the afterlife. Some designs are also horrifying, but subtle, such as the 'Beautiful Death' that illustrates how beauty can be everlasting even when you're rotting in the grave; and 'The Juggler' that exhibits his specialty in juggling skulls.

Going into its fourth year, Akumu Ink has started getting their products printed in California, USA, to be able to achieve a softer, higher quality print. Not only will you enjoy the designs, but the T-shirts themselves are 100 percent cotton, and the hoodies are just as comfortable.

Akumu Ink can now be found in over 100 stores worldwide as well as here in the UK, NoFlyOnUs (www.noflyonus.com), and Asylum Store in Derby, which carry a vast array of the Akumu Ink collection.



LATE VACANCY

FINE LINE TATTOOS SHROPSHIRE

Modern, busy tattoo studio seeks second experienced artist to work alongside owner/artist, Rena, and husband, Stuart (front of house). We require a clean, dedicated person able to tattoo in a variety of styles. Must have previous shop experience.

We are a friendly, sober, drug-free studio and expect the same from any applicants! References and examples of work required so please send to rena.fincham@sky.com.



SHORT SLEEVES

TWISTED SISTER TATTOO PARLOUR

(Awesome name, Ed.) is a new tattoo shop with an all-female team, now open in Heaton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. twistedsistertattoo@yahoo.co.uk.



KIRITUHI TATTOO

Are changing, well... everything! First up is a name change to Ink Kings - along with that goes a hot new studio that can be found at 6 Nottingham Rd, Ilkeston, Derbyshire. Tel: 0115 9324602 and find them on the web at kirituhitattoo.com. That's one sweet looking studio...

MOVING

It's the new black, you know. Sith Art Collective have found a new home on Heigham Street, now incorporating 'The Yard', an outlet for graffiti and street art in Norwich, together forming the Sith Art Collective with it's own shop, workspace, outdoor graffiti wall and tattoo studio. Sith Art Collective can be found at 7 Heigham Street, Norwich.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

INDIGO STARS

Had a message in earlier this week that said this: "Just like to try and get our new studio in Aylesbury mentioned... Indigo Stars Tattoo and Piercing Studio. 01296 707131." Consider it done brothers and sisters...

TURPENTINE TATTOOS

It's been a long time coming in South London, but Turpentine Tattoos is now open. Two great resident artists with years of experience – Andrew Zelena and Christian Hold Fast – are in the studio catering for all your custom tattoo needs. They have a station for international guest artists and are open seven days a week, 11:30-19:30 at 10A Victoria House, South Lambeth Road, SW8 1QT, London. Tel: 02077 356448 – get it on!



PAINTED LADY II: THE REVENGE

Painted Lady Tattoo Parlour has opened a new shop, Painted Lady II: The Revenge. Jonathan Peeler, Dawnii Fantana, Matt Craven Evans, Goldilox, and Matt Youl are at your service. 6 West Heath Rd, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 3TG. Tel: 01216 086086. www.paintedladytattoostudio.com.

FIVE MAGICS

Finally (man there's a lot of people moving this month), Five Magics in Sheffield have a new resident artist as of June in the shape of the wonderful Miss Polly. Head on out to facebook.com/MissPollytattoos or facebook.com/fivemagicstattoo to find out more.



RANDOM READER

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

"I got my first issue of Skin Deep in December 2009 (the one I'm holding), and ever since then I have been a fan and haven't missed a single issue. I enjoy reading the magazine from cover to cover, especially the articles about the cover models. They are all such strong, inspirational people. I started getting tattooed at the age of 18 and I'm now 28 with a growing collection. I also love art and have my own website, www.georgescustomartwork.co.uk" Georgina Roberts, Worcestershire.



APOLOGY FOR ERROR

Yeah, we screwed up. A while back we printed this here pic and credited to the wrong dude. It is in fact Leigh Oldcorn at Cosmic Tattoo. Slapped wrists with a flexible ruler...

TALKING OF TECH...



We came across this story the other day about Dave Hurban (tattoo artist at Dynasty Tattoo in Newfield, New Jersey), who loves his iPod Touch so much that he had four magnets implanted into his wrist using micro-dermal anchors. "I took the ends of magnets and actually adhered them to the back of the iPod, and that's how they click into my skin. I can go for a run and it won't come off. I've already taken it to the gym and jogged with it on."

So there you go – whatever next... iPhone? iPad?

Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

DOMESTIC SHOWS

June 9-10

MK TATTOO CONVENTION

Milton Keynes, England
www.mktattooconvention.co.uk

June 9-10

PERTH TATTOOWAR

Salutation Hotel, Perth

June 9-10

READING TATTOO SHOW

Rivermead Leisure Complex
 Reading, Berkshire, England
www.readingtattooshow.co.uk
 01189 590700
readingtattooshow@hotmail.co.uk

June 23-24

INK FOR HEROES

York Racecourse
 York, England
www.inkforheroes.co.uk
inkforheroes@hotmail.co.uk

June 29-July 2

INKFEST – A FESTIVAL OF TATTOO ART & ALTERNATIVE MUSIC

Woolacombe Bay Holiday Park
 Woolacombe, Devon, England
www.inkfest.co.uk

June 30-July 1

BELFAST YEAR OF THE DRAGON

Hilton Belfast hotel
 4 Lanyon Place
 Belfast, BT1 3LP
 United Kingdom
www.belfastyearofthedragon.com

July 7-8

DARE VALLEY INK 'N' IRON

Michael Sobell Sports Centre
 Aberdare, South Wales
www.darevalleyinkniron.co.uk

July 21-22

STATE OF THE ART TATTOO, BURLIQUE & ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE FESTIVAL

The Assembly Rooms, Derby
www.tattoo-2001.com

July 28-29

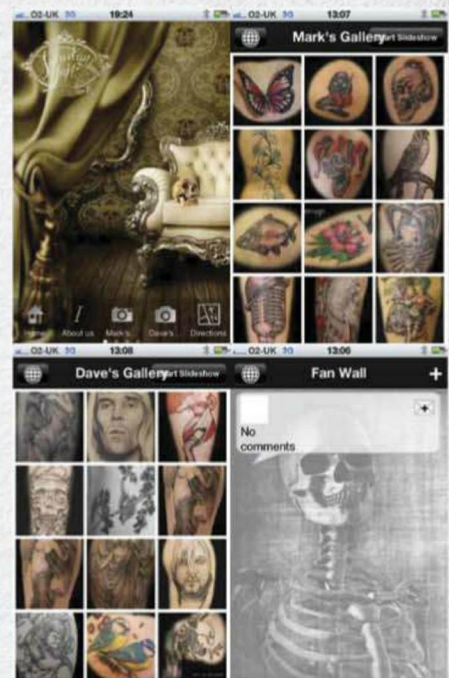
PORTSMOUTH TATTOO CONVENTION

Portsmouth Guildhall
 Portsmouth, England
www.portsmouthtattooconvention.com



MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SHOW

Here we go again... the Manchester International Tattoo Show is almost upon us! It doesn't seem like five minutes ago we were loading up for London. Anyway, tickets are on sale now and we're expecting them to fly off the shelves. As with all our shows, get yourself a weekend ticket and grab a free exclusive Manchester Show T-shirt that won't be available again after this event. The artist list is looking phenomenal behind the scenes and there's already some great talent on board, with more confirming everyday. Check for regular updates at manchestertattooshow.com See you there!



HERE COMES THE FLOOD

I say here comes the flood, but it's actually the only one I've seen so far... but the bar is raised pretty damn high now for those considering following in the wake. Tracy and Kelliejo at Smartly Applied developed this app for Suburban Ink – it's been pretty well recieved too with over 1,000 downloads before they had even started promoting it (and that was only about three weeks ago). Hunt it down, it's pretty cool and like I say, probably the shape of things to come. If you want a quick overview of it, there's also a nice little video here that you can take a look at: <http://animoto.com/play/2zQcmuzQnxttAQYG47RuCA>.

CHARITY BASH

Tribal Images Tattoo Studio (Marsh Street South, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent) are running a competition prior to their Ink for Heroes charity event in which the public get to design a small tattoo for this fundraiser. The winner of the competition will get their design tattooed on them, or another nominated person free of charge (must be over 18), and their design will also be the design used on the day. The bash itself happens on Friday, June 8, 2012, when this design will be used in support of Help for Heroes. The tattoo will cost £20 with all money going to the charity.

The artists at Tribal Images will be giving their time free of charge, and the studio and Urban Assault studio supplies are providing the supplies so that 100 percent of the money raised will go directly to the charity. Tattoos will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis (no appointments) and will be available from 11.00am to 8.00pm.

For those not wanting a tattoo or who are unable to attend, but are wanting to make a donation, collection tins will be in the studio on the run-up to the event, or you can donate online at <http://www.bmycharity.com/tattooforheroes>, 01782 268691, www.tribalimages.co.uk.

HIT THE ROAD JACK

THE CALL OF THE WILD



Mr. Rzymiski, Rock 'n' Roll Tattoos Scotland

BELFAST YEAR OF THE DRAGON

JUNE 30-JULY 1

BELFAST, HUH? NEVER BEEN! WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Well, the show itself is being held at the Hilton Belfast hotel, 4 Lanyon Place, Belfast, BT1 3LP (02890 277000 – in case you get really lost). That's in a great location on the banks of the Lagan river. Belfast has a ton of stuff you can be doing in the evening as well, but why would you want to be anywhere else?

AND?

Can we tempt you with the delicious McKinlay's Glamour Models from sunny Scotland putting on several glamour shows throughout the weekend? Thought so...

WHO'S WORKING THE SHOW?

Well, a couple of the guys from Rock 'n' Roll Tattoo will be getting down for the show. Bez from Triple Six will also be there for the duration, as will the crew at DragonHeart from Edinburgh, Simon Williams from the Isle of Man and a host of other's talents too – check out the website for more up-to-date artist lists.

SOUNDS GREAT. WHAT'S THE LINK SO I CAN CHECK IT A BIT MORE?

Here: belfastyearofthedragon.com – if you're lucky, it might even be a sunny day so that you can grab yourself some drinks outside in this beautiful place too.

INKFEST

WOOLACOMBE BAY HOLIDAY PARK
JUNE 29-JULY 2

WHAT GIVES HERE THEN?

Apart from it being held in one of the best places in the UK? Lots. Woolacombe itself is awesome and there's a ton of stuff to do in striking distance from surfing to eating pasties and ice cream. More importantly, the crew from Painted Lady will be riding the waves to get there (actually, they'll probably drive), our resident traveller, Craig Lee, will also be around alongside Poison Ink, Haunted Tattoo, Shakey Pete... tons of them! It's gonna be a firecracker...

WOW. ANYTHING ELSE?

Oh yeah, King Kurt, Anti-Nowhere League, Long Tall Texans, Vince Ray, and a train full of other cool bands will be shaking their moneymakers too.

I'M THERE! WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Well, you can take your kids if that's your bag, you'll need a ticket in advance from inkfest.co.uk/tickets, but aside from that, some blank skin wouldn't go amiss. Best check out the site for the really fine details.



Draumii Fontana, Painted Lady

Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

August 4-5

MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SHOW

Manchester Central

Tel: 01244 663400

www.manchestertattooshow.com

August 12

SOMERSET TAT2 CONVENTION

Bridgwater Sports & Social Club

Bridgwater, Somerset

Tel: 01278 439569

August 18-19

NORWICH BODYART FESTIVAL

St Andrews Hall, Norwich

Norfolk, England

www.norwichbodyartfestival.co.uk

August 24-26

MAIDEN CITY INK TATTOO CONVENTION

St Columb's Hall

Orchard Street

Derry City

Northern Ireland

Tel: Zac at Skin Art Tattoo, 02871 363076

maidencityink@aol.com

October 12-14

TATTOO JAM

Doncaster Racecourse

www.tattoojam.com

01244 663400

October 27-28

HALLOWEEN TATTOO BASH

The Coal Exchange, Cardiff

www.facebook.com/halloweentattoobash

November 17-18

THE EAST COAST TATTOO EXPO

Highfields Holiday Park, Clacton, Essex

www.eastcoastexpo.co.uk

Enquiries to redsonya6@mac.com

2013

January 27

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**SEE ALL INTERNATIONAL
SHOWS ON NEXT PAGE**

WALK THIS WAY

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE

There can't be anybody in the entire world who's not been to see *Avengers Assemble*. We're expecting the cast of characters in the movie to prompt a ton of tribute tattoos over the summer months – maybe they'll even replace all of those Joker and Jack Sparrow tattoos as being the 'thing that defines the year'

Anyway... that's up to you, but along our travels, we've found many different slants on the movie art, all of which are very cool indeed. The bottom design is a fitting tribute to Maurice Sendak by Hannah via her Deviant Art pages. Sendak is the guy who created *Where The Wild Things Are* (from all the way back in 1963... jeez!). We thought this was kind of cool in its own way.

Then over at Ken Taylor's homepage (kentaylor.co.au), we found a gorgeous Hulk poster that's got our office wall name written all over it. Along those very same lines, there's also these others pictured hereabouts that all come from the mondo studio that we featured a few months back when we were talking about maybe hosting a similar competition for tattoo artists at Tattoo Jam.

Needless to say, these are essential things to see simply for their own sake, and we need make no excuses for featuring them here. If you're into art, the mondo gallery is the place to be checking out on an almost daily basis at the moment. Check them out here: blog.mondotees.com and add them to whatever thing you keep track of



things on the web with.

If you're ever stuck for a great idea or some inspiration for your next piece, and you can't find something there to jar your mind with, all hope is lost. Plus, take my advice and keep scrolling away there until you find the genesis of the Emperor Ming poster. Beautiful in almost every way imaginable.

More art for its own sake
next issue...

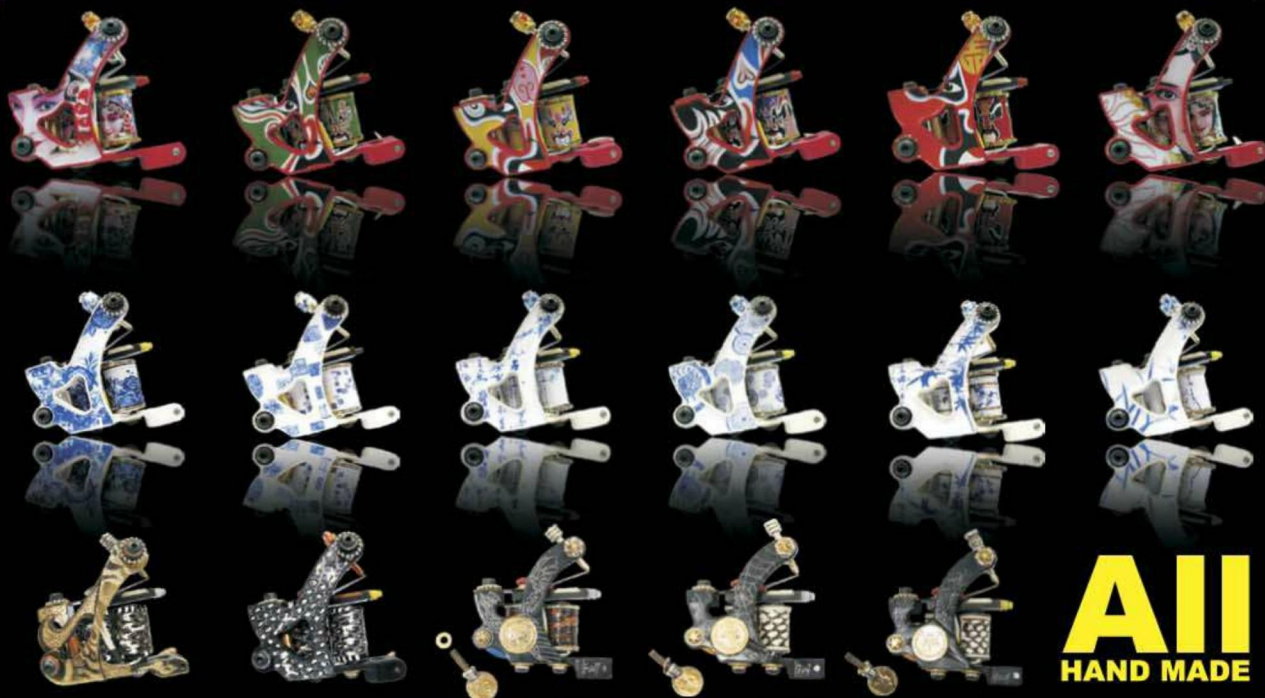


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www.tattoofest.pl

June 15-17

12TH VALENCIA TATTOO CONVENTION

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www.valenciatattooconvention.com
www.spaintattooconventions.com

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PAUL SWEENEY



IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

Wait! Before allowing your ailing minds to jump to a multitude of addled conclusions and thus avoiding my column altogether, allow me to put you at ease

I'm not about to turn this month's column into a confessional whereby I reveal a plethora of dark family secrets, the kind of incestuous tales delivered with relentless detail, the likes of which are more commonly reserved for daytime television. For starters

I don't have any. Incestuous tales that is, not family. I do have family; they've not completely abandoned me... unless of course they managed to fund the development and completion of cyborg replicas without me knowing... or (more feasibly) had clones made, allowing them to exist in a secret location, or an alternate reality where my existence would be of a far more tolerable nature.

I'm sure even if any of these bizarre scenarios were indeed at all possible, my family would never dream of abandoning me.

OK, maybe they've dreamt of abandoning me, everyone dreams, right? That doesn't necessarily mean we want them all to come true... anyway I'm sure it was along time ago, before I moved out. The beautiful thing about family, through thick and thin (let's face it I'm about as stupid and skinny as they come), in hell or high water, a good family always supports one another.

Every family has its history, whether you're

a descendant of Irish prostitutes or Egyptian royalty from outer space, be proud of your routes, no matter how tutti-frutti they might be. My Granddad had my Dad when he was in his 30th year of existence, and my Dad had me when he was in his 30th year of

existence; I turned 30 on the May 6 this year, and in true rebellious fashion, I've not impregnated anyone. Instead I got a tattoo! Not of a baby, mind you the more I think about it, it would've been hilarious if I had!

The generation jig isn't quite up though, I've done the maths and taking into account, on average, human incubation takes around nine months between conception and birth, that means I've still got about three months to find someone and convince them I would make a suitable contributor to

growth of a new life within their very own 'Garden of Eden', so I've not quite broken the 30-year Sweeney generation chain yet... that'll be totally doable and not at all a creepy reason to start a relationship with someone!

Alternatively, I could just donate sperm? Undoubtedly if I were to discuss either of these ideas with my mum, it'd be the only time I hear her say, "I think the tattoo was probably best!"



Chris Sumi

IN TRUE REBELIOUS FASHION,
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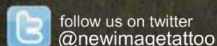
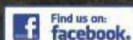
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THE APPRENTICE

Once in a while, you can come across an apprentice who has taken the bull by the horns and risen to the occasion. It has to be said that an apprentice is only as good as their mentor will let them fly, so in this case, we must tip our hats to Iain Stanfield at Mother of all Sins for taking Lil' Vicki Norton to – we think you'll agree – a level that some can only dream of. Read on children of the corn...

Of course, we weren't going to let her get away with palming us off with any old story. One look at the ink and it's pretty obvious to anybody who has even a basic understanding of tattoo design that there's a good story behind this. So what's going on in Sutton Coldfield that's so damn special? Vicki has been apprenticing under Iain for 14 months now, but this tattoo is actually comes from just six months into her story there.

Helpfully, this sprightly bloke (who's not holding his stomach in for the camera at all – it's OK, we've all been there) is Vicki's old man, Paul Norton. Mr Norton is 62 (we put that in because that's what the daily papers would do to make it all look official!) and a part-time healer. The image meantime is taken from

MR NORTON "SAT LIKE A BLOODY ROCK", WHICH IS GOOD. THAT'S WHAT ALL DADS SHOULD DO WHILE THEIR DAUGHTERS SET ABOUT THEM WITH THE NEEDLES



the work of Dan Platt (top character modeller whose awesome work you can find at danplatt.com – believe me, what you'll find there will inspire you all the way into next month), and is a take on the god, Mercury, complete with a double helix, replacing the traditional adders normally found in the classical caduceus symbol – that's the symbol of the healer for those of you who didn't go to school that day.

The work was originally produced by Dan for Merck (global healthcare giant), but we figured it was so excellently duped for a much higher purpose here, that it was more than worth shouting about.

Apparently, Mr Norton "sat like a bloody rock", which is good. That's what all dads should do while their daughters set about them with the needles. Top work everybody.





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BRING ON THE PAIN

The question you will doubtless get asked most after your first tattoo, is this: "Did it hurt?" You may well be asking yourself the same thing before you go in for your first one.

The big and clever answer of course, is "no". And the truth is not so far removed from that either really. It doesn't hurt in the big scheme of things. It might smart a bit every now and again, but it's not even

on the scale of say, toothache, or having a baby (apparently), and it's certainly nowhere near having a part of your body removed with no anaesthetic. What it can be though, is mighty uncomfortable after a

is basically surrendering yourself totally to what's happening to your body. It's a part of the deal you're making with the tattooist – an unbreakable bond. And if you play it right and continue



Evo, Wicked Needles

THE STOMACH IS A LEGENDARY PAIN ZONE, AND ANYWHERE THAT THERE'S NO MUSCLE BETWEEN SKIN AND BONE IS PRETTY HIGH ON THE LIST AS WELL

few hours and for some people, it probably does hurt – but once you've got started, you're hardly likely to be asking to be left alone or running out the door before it's finished. So allow me to let you in on a few secrets to make it a bit easier on yourself regardless of how rock hard you are on the inside...

It's always a good idea to make sure you eat a few hours beforehand to get some sustenance inside of you. If you're really worried but still determined, you can go down the road of one of the great numbing creams that are on the market – we've discussed and tested them out in the mag before with some good results. Nobody will think bad of you if that's what it takes to get the job done.

There is also a place you can go called 'the zone'. This is the best place in the world while being tattooed. The zone

getting tattooed, it becomes a place you can get to very quickly that you will begin to love.

How do you get there? Well... sadly, I don't have a road map. It's one of those journeys you're going to have to take on your own – but it is there and you can find it pretty damn quickly too. You'll see.

It's worth wrapping up here by saying that there are genuinely some parts of the body that really do hurt more than others though. The stomach is a legendary pain zone, and anywhere that there's no muscle between skin and bone is pretty high on the list as well. I am of course assuming that by the time you get around to getting something like your eyelids tattooed, you've spent more than a few hours in the chair already and don't need to hear anything from me. 🍷

PUBLIC SKIN

Public skin – no, not pubic skin as I saw it written in another tattoo mag one day – is living your life with your hands, neck, head (which of course includes the face for most people) tattoos on full display. These are hard/impossible to cover places – unless you happen to like hanging out in a bee-keepers outfit or something.

Personally, I don't live with public skin. Not for any particular reason other than I don't want any. In years gone by, public skin always meant "I am a tattoo artist", and that was the end of the story. I kind of liked it that way. That was back in the dark ages though when going into a studio still felt like you were doing something secretive and your first time was a bigger deal than getting laid. Since I'm not in Motley Crue or a tattoo artist, I'm quite happy with that decision. I love this job with all my heart, but who knows what may happen next – and that's something you need to consider. Where are you headed in your life?

And this is where it gets muddy. Some people are able to function perfectly well with public skin – some of our staff thrive on it, especially the photographers. But it has to be said, they're pretty shit hot at what they do and after all this time in the game, are hardly likely to decide that they need to go get themselves a nine-to-five gig to make the rent. Most people existing in the world however, will probably come across conflict when it comes to working for a living.

There's no real reason for



Simon Caves, The Country Gent

THE ROAD GOES BOTH WAYS NO MATTER HOW UNFAIR IT MIGHT SEEM, SO MAYBE PUTTING A LITTLE MORE THOUGHT INTO IT BEFORE YOU GO ALL OUT IS NO BAD THING. IT'S PRETTY TOUGH MAKING YOUR OWN WAY IN THE WORLD

this conflict to take place other than the simple fact that some employers don't like it. It's not the image they wish to portray to the world. As somebody pointed out to me a while back, "it's my right to have my hands tattooed if I want to!" I'm in that corner all the way, but I live in the real world, in which I also have to truthfully say, it's also the employer's right to not have

someone working for them with their hands tattooed.

The road goes both ways no matter how unfair it might seem, so maybe putting a little more thought into it before you go all out is no bad thing.

It's pretty tough making your own way out there in the world these days.

Unless of course, you've filled the other 95 percent of your skin up that is, in which case, I say go for it. 🐝

NEXT ISSUE WE LOOK AT

CHOOSING AN ARTIST & COLLECTING

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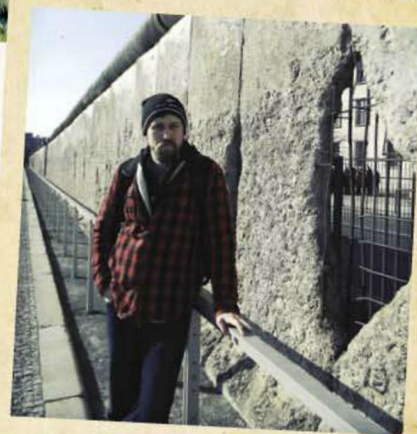
Although Berlin is a city with a terribly dark past, I would describe its present as anything but. Many young Germans flock here and you can see why

Berlin has an incredible underground art and music scene going on and there is plenty of beautiful architecture to get inspired by, not to mention cafes, bars, shopping and nightlife. So before our next convention, we stop to see some of the historical sites. Many, I have to say, are places to do with the Second World War and Cold War era – we visit the remains of the Berlin Wall and the Brandenburg Gate. The city certainly has a touch of the cold eastern European feel that I was expecting; it has a lot on its shoulders from a

by Craig Lee

troubled past, but there is a lot of artistic talent bubbling away here, and the old and the new kind of work here side by side. Sadly we can't stay for long as we are held to a tight schedule and our next stop is calling, the port city of Rotterdam.

To most there are a few European cities that convey a very romantic image; Vienna, Prague and Bruges to name a few, and Rotterdam is another one of these grand old cities in my mind. The reality was not quite the romantic encounter I had imagined though. Almost all of the older historical buildings were bombed



The Berlin wall

during WWII, so the architecture and housing Rotterdam is blessed with dates from the '60s. Don't get me wrong, there are some great spots, but it is definitely a city of modernity – concrete is king here. The convention is held at Ahoy, which is an exhibition and show centre with various halls and arenas within advertising not just the tattoo convention, but in upcoming months, Guns 'n' Roses, and (get excited) JLS. Absolutely everybody speaks English making

Job de Quay



Tattoo Ink Explosion



shopping and asking for directions very easy, and talking to customers even more enjoyable. I missed having conversations whilst tattooing in eastern Germany and Hungary, even though I tried my hardest.

As we arrive and set up, each artist receives a goodie box full of sweets and alcohol which is a nice touch and handy to be able to give your customer something full of sugar if they are feeling a little faint.

A lot of international artists have travelled to work the show, Liorcifer from Tribulation Tattoo in New York, Pedro Soos from Portugal, as well as local Dutch artists Job de Quay from Salon Serpent, and travelling artist Jelle Nellmans who has returned to his homeland to work the show. I also spot the Dutch tattooing legend Anelique Houtcamp walking around and getting tattooed. The busiest booth of the weekend was without doubt the old school barbers who were cutting hair and shaving gents non-stop. Saturday is a fantastic day of the week to be in Rotterdam, aside from the convention, all of the city's

art galleries are open into the early hours of the morning and are free to enter. This is an excellent opportunity for many artists who have travelled here just to work the convention, as not only do you get out and see some of the city, but incredibly you can have a drink and check out some art too. Cheers to Rotterdam!

Heading back to Germany, nestled in the west amongst Cologne and Düsseldorf, our next stop is the small but perfectly formed town of Mönchengladbach. The third Tattoo Ink Explosion is held in the Kaiser Friedrich Hall and we are not disappointed upon arrival; the building is grand and beautifully decorative inside and out. Working in such a place makes the whole show feel that bit more special – the tattoo artists are split across three levels and several rooms, making the whole thing feel that bit more intimate. Everyone is extremely friendly and I spend the weekend working between Eva Schultz from Austria and Litos Pinto from Florida who are both not only lovely human beings, but very talented artists. As we walk around, incredible tattoo artists are scattered across every room, traditional tattooing from New Zealand by Brent



King of Kings tattoo

McCowan, Marco Hengst from the Netherlands, Ceasar and Crispy from Black Garden Tattoo in London, and Adriaan Machete from Berlin.

The whole show is geared up for the artists – it's small so there is enough work for everybody. There is free catering and the after party is on Saturday night so everyone can make it without worrying about early morning flights or having to drive home. Working in such a grand and impressive building with its painted murals certainly gets the creativity flowing, and Germany is covered with 🌸

old school gents barber

outstanding architecture, so after the show we stop at Moyland Castle, which is well worth a visit. If you think of the classic fairytale castle with turrets, a moat full of water and a draw bridge, then you are pretty much spot on, except this is not just a castle, it's an art gallery spread over three levels. My fairytale is complete.

Our next stop is the small town of Aachen to visit Mr. Halbstark – a young German artist I met out in Australia last year. He works in a private art space close to the town centre so I took the opportunity to

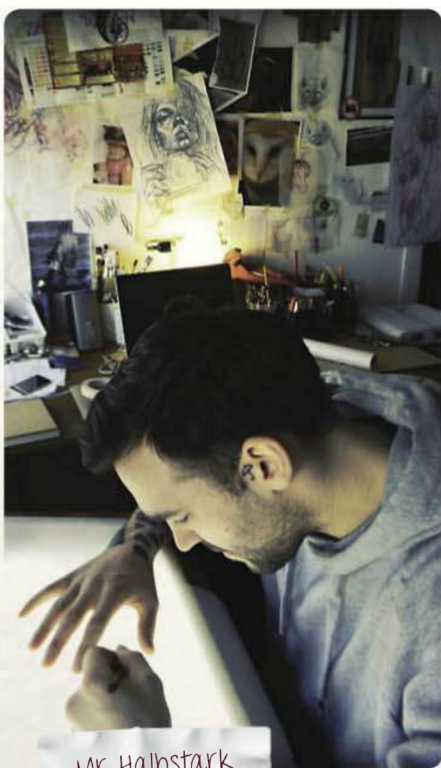


The Brandenburg Gate



Tattoo by Halbstark

see him tattoo in his own creative environment. Halbstark's work is graphical and illustrative; bright colours, bold shapes and heavy lines with negative space make it totally refreshing. His private studio is in an old apartment building that consists of two rooms, one for painting, drawing and creating, the other for



Mr Halbstark

tattooing. The walls of this room are covered in tattoo designs and stencils, which spread from the skirting boards all the way up the walls and across the ceiling.

He is a very passionate and an inspiring guy to talk to, but at the same time he doesn't take himself too seriously. "Lots of older tattoo artists always tell you how things should be done and what you can and can't do, I like to work in my own space and just create, I do tattoos that fit the body and don't conform to anybody's rules."

He usually only works on one tattoo a day and most of his customers travel from places like east Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium to get tattooed in his unique style. It is a great spot to work – one hour from Brussels and only a four-hour train ride to London. And although, like most, he is more comfortable in his own working space, he still travels regularly working guest spots and conventions all over the world. "Sometimes I travel and don't tattoo, I hang out with my artist

friends; we talk, paint, party and just get inspired."

His next plan is to relocate his art space to Berlin: "There are lots of great artists and friends there and it is not so secretive. Berlin is an exception as tattoo artists there are happy to share information, hang out and work together."

I realise that I am thankful for artists like Halbstark pushing the art form of tattooing forward into the future – it is a better place to work in because of a fresh approach like his. 🐾

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the completionist

Scottish Gerald works in the accountancy department of his brother's haulage business which transports goods around the UK. He is 54 and was born and raised in Dundee. Despite the obvious interest in tattoos, he also likes to spend his free-time windsurfing...

Some years ago, Gerald went to Greece and obtained his Royal Yacht Club Certificate by safely navigating his way around an island. Working six days a week though, it can be a real struggle for him to maintain his hobbies. "I enjoy nothing more than going out on my boat, but to be honest, when you're working so much, the one free day you have left you're having to do household chores. And I often like to take a nice long walk too."

Over the years though, Gerald has found the time to have almost all of his body tattooed. Back in primary school he recalls seeing a picture of someone in the Sunday Post sporting an eagle tattoo, and vaguely remembers the article being about how the tattoo had apparently shrunk. It was an image that was to remain deeply implanted in his mind before at the age of 26, Gerald finally got his first tattoo. "I'd bought my first car and was heading back home from a weekend break and knew there was a tattoo artist in Gallowgate, Aberdeen. That's all I knew though, I can't even remember his name. But I went in there, hadn't really planned for it, and got a small panther tattooed on my ass! I guess I wasn't really bothered too much at the time because if it didn't look great, at least it would be hidden from view."

Later, Gerald found out about another artist in Dundee by the name of Graham Latto, and finally got to have the eagle done on his chest he'd always wanted. "He hadn't been open for long, and didn't have a very large range of eagle flash, but I found one anyway which wasn't exactly what I'd



himself having to wait in long queues for the first time. When he got to get his tattoo done (a parrot), the outline was done by Terry, but the colouring-in was done by Terry's son, Stuart, who was apprenticing with his father at the time. Stuart eventually opened his own shop, and Gerald continued to get work done by him. His first large piece he had done in Stuart's new shop was the large tiger on his back.

Roughly ten years ago one of the drivers at the haulage company told Gerald about a new tattoo studio that had opened up in Perth, a place called Trev's House of Tattoos. "I had kind of lost interest in being tattooed in Glasgow at that point, as there were always such long queues, and not always the guarantee of getting tattooed. So when I heard Trev had opened up a new shop I was down there immediately, and there and then started discussing new ideas. We came up with this great dragon design that

I GUESS I WASN'T
REALLY BOTHERED TOO
MUCH AT THE TIME,
BECAUSE IF IT DIDN'T
LOOK GREAT AT LEAST
IT WOULD BE HIDDEN

initially had in mind, but I got it just the same. I liked it, but at that point I still didn't have much knowledge of tattoos so didn't really have much I could compare it to." Soon after Gerald discovered the tattooing of Terry Wiggly in Glasgow; it was a whole new experience for him. Because of Terry's popularity, Gerald found





started on my ribs and went down my leg. I was hooked on Trev's Japanese style of tattooing, and eventually had two Geisha girls done, which then led to having a bonsai tree and a pathway travelling all the way up and wrapping around my legs. Then I had some koi carps done to counteract my dragon piece. I was just so in love with Trev's passion for tattooing." At this stage George had already had the experience of being tattooed in the Far East, having had two pieces done in Hong Kong, so his interest in far eastern tattooing styles had solid foundations.

"Then one day he called me up. He'd had this idea for a head tattoo. At that point I was almost covered, so I was quite happy to do so. He'd booked in to tattoo at the Derry Tattoo Show and asked if I'd like to go there with him and have the design done there and then and also to have it entered into the competition. I was delighted. Over the course of the show he'd finished my head tattoo and won three prizes in the process! Best Japanese, Best colour, and Craziest/Most Unusual." 🌸



OVER THE COURSE
OF THE SHOW
TREV FINISHED MY
HEAD TATTOO AND
WON THREE PRIZES
IN THE PROCESS!



Gerald has roughly 95 percent of his skin covered in tattoos now, and he went onto explain to me how people generally react to him. "Everywhere I go I get stopped by strangers to ask me about my tattoos. And after all this time I've never had any negative feedback. But I'm not stupid, there could very well be some negative feedback out there, but I've just never heard it said to me. I've never sought out to force the way I look on other people, I'm not looking for attention, it's always people that have come up to me to ask the questions. I've also taken on a role with a lot of the younger guys who aren't tattooed, telling them how to properly think about it before taking that first step. I think that's all really important to know, and I can truly speak from experience."

A rather extreme step that Gerald himself has made was to get his genitals tattooed. "I don't know, I guess I'd just decided that I'd come so far with my tattoos, and I'd seen Dave Fleet from Abracadabra do a dragon on someone's genitals which flowed with the genital shape and looked really good. So I asked Trev to go ahead and finish me off... so to speak! Now there's just my armpits and my face mask to go, then I'm all done. Completely covered." 🐼

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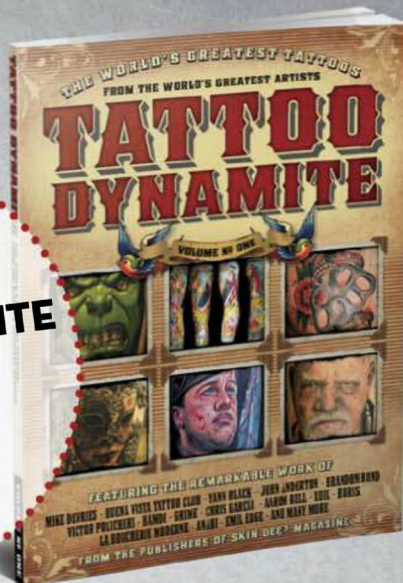


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THE MONSTER

IN THE CLOSET

Ever feel like you should have been born somewhere else? I've always adored New York and all it has to offer – it's kind of like a home from home. On this particular day in history, I just so happened to cross paths with a certain Mr Dave DeVries, someone I have previously had to admire only from afar...

CONTACTS
davedevries.com
themonsterengine.com
sacredgallerynyc.com

Sacred Gallery is one of the most authentic and hardest working 'satellites' of the tattoo art world, and it's here that I bump into Dave DeVries who is currently exhibiting his Monster Engine project. Everybody is familiar with Monster Engine, right? The Monster Engine began back in 1998 when Dave DeVries – perhaps better known to the world as one of the premier illustrators for Marvel and Universal Studios of the rather high-profile characters like Spiderman and Wolverine – left his stuff lying around the house...

"It all kind of started when... well, I should probably give you the back-story first. I had been doing all these monsters and characters for different comic book companies and Universal; I'm nearly always working from a line drawing, moving on to colouring it, and a lot of the time that's without a point of reference. Anyway, one day, my niece grabs my sketch book and starts drawing in there..."

"You know how artists are with their sketch books – it's like somebody writing in your diary – but when I looked at her drawings, I kind of figured 'how would it be if I took this drawing and painted it green like the Hulk?' That's how it all began, and if you take a look at some of the others, that's what happened afterwards too in many different ways."

"Normally, when you do a drawing or an illustration, you have a reasonable



I'M NEVER GOING TO DRAW AS WELL AS THEM (THE KIDS), BUT I'M NOT COMPETING WITH THEM. IT'S A HYBRID... A WHOLE DIFFERENT BEAST AND YOU HAVE TO GIVE THE BEAST RESPECT

sort of understanding of what you want to get out of it. Sometimes, I'll look at the drawings that I use and think nothing here is inspiring. So I'll throw it down, put it on the board and start working on it, and all of a sudden it comes alive because it does things I don't expect. It's a wild ride, you just hang on to whatever happens – that's what I love about it.

"So when I got into this, it was always an experiment. I've had people who have been negative about it from the point of view that they look at my work, then look at the kid's drawings and they say things like, 'I think I prefer the kid's drawings!' Well so do I, because I'm never going to draw as well as them, but I'm not competing with them. It's a hybrid... a whole

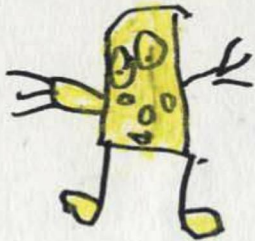
different beast, and you have to give the beast respect. The way kids draw and think – it's superior to how we do as adults, but it's just an experiment and it boggles my mind that people get offended that I'm doing this. I'm not destroying their minds – it's just ridiculous. There are no losers in this situation!"

You started out with your niece, but what happened next? Do kids and parents actively hunt you down now to get involved in the project?

"In the beginning, they were relatives, but what tends to happen now is that I strike up a relationship with the parents online – I also do some 'shows' at schools too where I might pick a drawing someone has done and then paint it live. 🌟"

Sion Smith
Dave DeVries exhibition images courtesy
Sacred Gallery, New York

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Chelsea



Michael Hughes 5

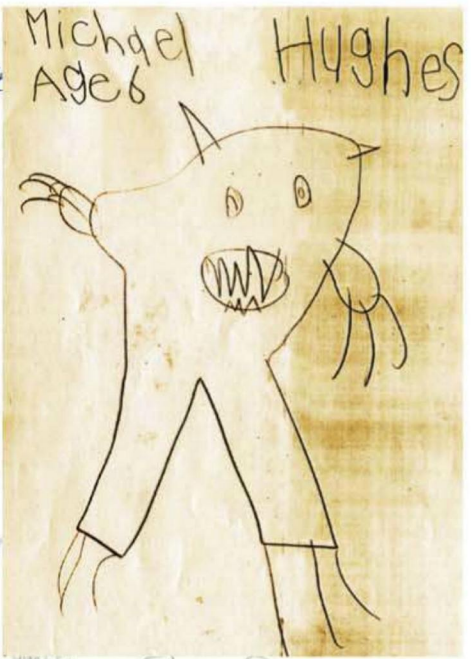


Christopher DeVries Age 5

Google-eye monster



Alyson DeVries age 7



Michael Age 10

Michael DeVries Age 10



Alyson DeVries Age 7



Alyson DeVries Age 3

WHO IS MR JIGGS?

There appear to have been many Mr Jiggs' across the years. Without dwelling on chimp trivia too much, the 'original' Jiggs played the character of Cheeta in the first two Weismüller Tarzan films and also appeared in the Laurel and Hardy classic, *Dirty Work*. When you start researching his background, you will find wildly differing facts on him, such as he may have been born in 1932 or as late as 1960. We're not sure of the lifespan of a chimp, but that sounds a little nefarious to us...

Any tattooed zookeepers specializing in chimps, please feel free to get in touch.

If you are reading this before the article, maybe you shouldn't...

With the parents onside, it's easy. We get to know each other and all they're interested in is their kid's drawing and there's no big deal about it. Nobody is expecting a piece of fine art or anything. There's permission forms and all that sort of thing, but generally, working with young kids is great. So long as everybody is in agreement, there's no problem. I sell prints of the work online and we split the fees 50/50 between me and the kid, so it's all fair. I simply wanted to do something cool that nobody had seen before. Another great thing is that because I usually work digitally all the time now, I get to paint. For the commercial stuff, it doesn't make sense to do it any other way and I love it, digital does things that paint can't do. But when it comes to *The Monster Engine*, I pretty much only work traditionally."

I'm curious as to how far the world is keen to embrace such a project. What started out as something for a few laughs seems to have had a ripple effect amongst those people who can

appreciate the finer points of what you're actually doing here.

"A while back, I did a gallery show in Burbank and had a freebie to promote the show, but it has gotten to the point now where people email me and we're talking about putting on shows in Texas, New Jersey... I'll go anywhere, even England! As long as people can pay my way and some expenses, I'm quite happy to do it anywhere.

"Here's the bottom line. When I do these live painting shows, I just want to inspire the kids with art. When I was young, I was inspired by a guy who came to our school, but this guy was the trainer and caretaker of Mister Jiggs, a full-grown chimpanzee. Mr Jiggs rode a motorcycle through this crowd of kids that I was part of. He comes through high fiving everyone... it was like a religious event and so incredible for me as a kid. Now I know I'll never attain the high drama and comedy of a chimp on a motorcycle driving through a crowd of children, but I do my best!"

I don't think I can top that as a source of inspiration to be honest, but there must be others who have tweaked your imagination in some form or other?

"For sure – Simon Bisley, Glenn Fabry – Glen quite a lot actually, as he did a lot of the DC Hellblazer covers, I love his work. Him, and Bill Sienkiewicz a hell of a lot."

We lose ourselves for a moment in a deconstruction on Bill Sienkiewicz's work on the graphic novel, *Stray Toasters*, which I freely admit I didn't understand then and still don't know. Neither does Dave, but we agree that sometimes when things look as great as that, you don't always need to understand them – which kind of brings us back full circle to *The Monster Engine*.

"What's funny is that when people look at the material in *The Monster Engine*, a lot of them will say 'Ah, I see Tim Burton' but Tim has absolutely nothing to do with it. They will swear it and accuse me of playing in Tim's world, but I'm not. It just so happens that when Tim creates, he creates with a childlike mind, and when I apply that dark palette to it, I think it naturally looks similar."

I posit that when people are confined by their own experiences,

that's the only point of reference that they are able to draw on. It's a very small percentage of the people that are getting to see *The Monster Engine* that know who people like Bill Sienkiewicz and Simon Bisley are, but everybody and their dog knows who Tim Burton, which enables them to use that to place it in their world. But let's move on. How did you end up at Sacred?

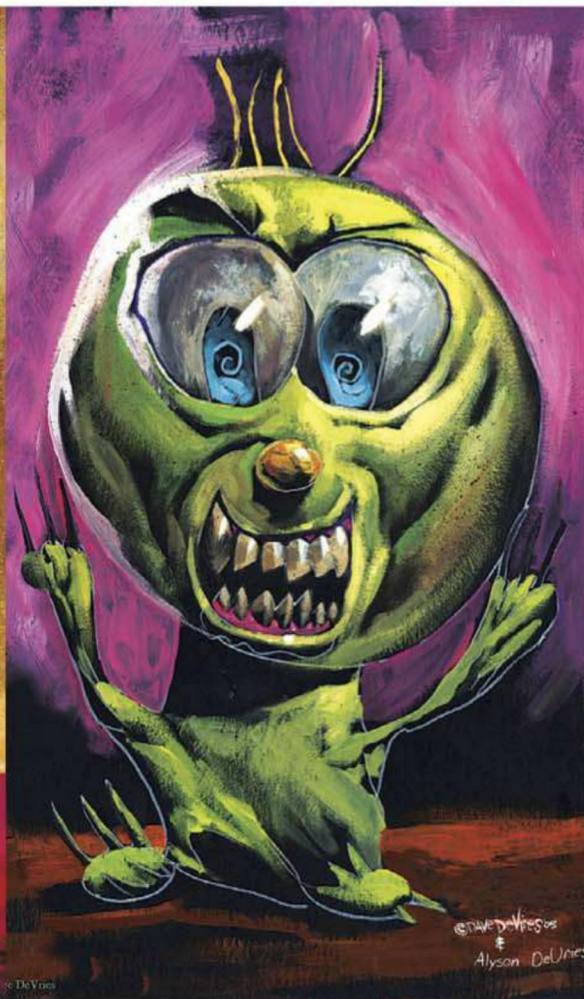
"I started doing this in 1998 and it took about seven years to get the book published. My wife and I spent half of our savings to get the book done. We put off buying a house and we chose not to have kids in order to get the book finished and then booked ourselves into this big trade show. We did the show and I found that I couldn't sell any books at the show because it was all trade. I was heartbroken – I had no idea how we were going to make the money back after we had just spent half of our savings launching it. I put my wife through hell. But the day after the show, the book started selling like crazy. In the first month after the launch, the site had 17 million hits on it – it was great to have that validation in this 'viral wave'.

"Over the years, a viral spike has happened a couple of times each year. This past December we had a similar huge spike – I don't know why – and that attracted the attention of Kevin at Sacred Gallery. I didn't even miss a beat when they asked me if I wanted to do a show. The space looks great and I love it because it's in New York and I can just put the paintings in my truck and drive it there instead of shipping them.

"The show is on for about a month – I'll drop in and out of it probably, especially if there's a buyer that wants to discuss an original piece. I can always be there if I need to. But you know, I love the tattoo world – it's a world that's just so appreciative of things that are different. People who put art on their skin for life tend to understand and really love what's going down with art. The tattoo world people – in a good way – are outlaws, and so are kids. When kids are drawing they will basically tell the world to 'fuck off' – this is what it means to me and you can't tell me what it means', and that's the same spirit of tattoo." 🙌

PEOPLE ACCUSE ME OF PLAYING IN TIM BURTON'S WORLD, BUT I'M NOT AT ALL. TIM CREATES WITH A CHILDLIKE MIND, AND WHEN I APPLY THAT DARK PALETTE, I THINK IT NATURALLY LOOKS SIMILAR







Victor Rodriguez

Not just a pretty face

Continuing our series of exclusives with the guys from NY INK, this issue – as you'll have already noticed – we hooked up with the one and only Megan Massacre...

Megan was born and raised in a small town near Reading, Pennsylvania. When she was four, her father moved to California which left Megan and her mother with nowhere to go before eventually ending up moving in with her father's parents. "That had a weird dynamic. Most people grow up saying 'my mum and my dad', and I would say, 'my mum, my grandpa and my grandma!'" And that's where she stayed until she turned 18 and started tattooing. "I'd always been good at art, so I always wanted to do something with my life that had something to do with art, but I was never like, 'oh, I wanna be a tattoo artist', I just knew that I wanted to do art. The opportunity just kind of presented itself."

One day a friend of hers asked for a ride to a nearby tattoo shop because she wanted to apply for a job as a piercer. When they arrived her friend told the people in the shop that Megan could draw really well and they asked her to draw something for them. She did, impressed them, and they asked if she'd ever considered doing tattoos. At that point Megan had just the one piercing and no tattoos, and admitted to them that it had never really crossed her mind, apart from once when she was about 14 and she'd asked about an apprenticeship in a shop, and they had told her it would cost \$5,000.

Later Megan went into a local tattoo shop to ask about apprenticing again. "They were like, 'have you ever done one?' I said 'no, I haven't' and they said, do you want to try one?' They actually set me up and let me

tattoo the apprentice there. I did a pretty good job and they said, 'do you wanna learn how to tattoo?' which is a no brainer really. But at that point, I didn't have any money for an apprenticeship." Megan explains that eight years ago when this happened people were just starting to charge for apprenticeships. At this point, Megan had literally just graduated from high school and was working a part-time job that barely paid anything, so she didn't have the \$3,000 they required. And so they reached an agreement – they would teach her how to tattoo, and as soon as she was ready to tattoo and start charging money for it, the money she made would go towards paying off her apprenticeship. "Usually, somebody doesn't just walk into a tattoo shop and do a tattoo the first time they walk in there. That's not normal. Usually it takes a while. So I think I kinda got a jumpstart on things, because within the next couple of months, I was already tattooing customers. For me, it was really fast."

In hindsight Megan admits to knowing nothing about tattooing at the time, and nothing about the industry. She remembers feeling very nervous about how uneducated she was in it. So despite thinking that it might not have been the right way to learn, it also had the knock-on effect of forcing her to learn everything about it, because she just didn't have the time to mess up. She was working every single day. "I get a lot of stick from people for not doing the traditional three-to-five-year apprenticeship, but I didn't even know about that when I was doing it. It took me about three



Victor Rodriguez

I GET A LOT OF STICK FROM PEOPLE FOR NOT DOING THE TRADITIONAL THREE-TO-FIVE-YEAR APPRENTICESHIP, BUT I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT THAT WHEN I WAS DOING IT

years of tattooing before I'd actually met enough people in the industry to learn that it was a way different world to what I thought it was.

"I was just an artist. I was really big on learning every different form of art though. I can work with every single medium there is. I can sculpt, I can do almost any different type of art you can do with your hands, because throughout my life, it was all I wanted to do... to learn different types of art. So tattooing to me was just another form of art. I told myself that I was going to master tattooing too. It took a couple of years before I was saying to myself, 'man, this is not just an artform, this is a complete lifestyle.'" 🍌

Megan remembers people being somewhat suspicious of her when she started. After six months of tattooing she still didn't have any tattoos of her own, and despite her being 18 she admits that she looked more like 14. "It was funny because one day my boss said that people who were coming in to get tattooed were terrified by me

because they thought I was a kid. So my boss told me that I'd need to start getting tattooed. That's actually why I got my first: "You have no choice!"

But Megan loved it immediately and began to get more and more. Looking young was still something she'd have to deal with though and remembers being at her first convention and

getting lots of weird looks from people when they saw a somewhat tattooed five-foot tall 18-year-old who looked 14. "But at that point I was really beginning to learn about the history and was discovering that there are certain values that you needed to have, a respect that you have to have for the industry and the people that

AT THAT POINT I WAS REALLY BEGINNING TO LEARN ABOUT THE HISTORY AND WAS DISCOVERING THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN VALUES THAT YOU NEEDED TO HAVE, A RESPECT THAT YOU HAVE TO HAVE FOR THE INDUSTRY



came before you, the people that taught you. And I learnt all of that. Even though I didn't necessarily do it right, I made the effort to learn everything I could."

Nowadays people will come up to her and ask about becoming tattoo artists. With the onset of reality TV shows, tattooing has become a mainstream business. She was two years into her tattooing when Miami Ink first started, and that was when she began to notice a lot of people coming from outside the industry wanting to tattoo. Her advice? "The last thing you want to do is teach yourself how to tattoo. There are tattoo kits that normal people can buy and they cost a lot of money. They give you everything you apparently need to start tattooing and people buy these things and they tattoo in their houses



I DEFINITELY REALLY LOVE FASHION. IT'S A WHOLE LOOK. IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE CLOTHES, IT'S ABOUT HOW EVERYTHING FITS TOGETHER. FOR ME, IT'S ANOTHER FORM OF ART. IT'S A LIVE INSTALLATION AS YOU'RE WALKING AROUND

– they're fucking themselves up, fucking other people up, and teaching themselves really bad habits that they can never unlearn. That's a good way to screw yourself and never become a good tattoo artist."

She explains that there are certain things you can't teach yourself. It is integral to becoming a tattooer to get an apprenticeship at a legitimate shop, to make sure the people that work there are well respected and good tattoo artists. To make sure the person you choose to tattoo under knows what they're talking about and has been in the industry for a while. "I wouldn't consider taking on an apprentice. I'd need to have been tattooing for at least 15 years. It's one of those things, I feel that even though I already know a lot about it, I still feel like there is tons of stuff I still need to learn. I definitely don't feel like I'm ready to pass on knowledge to another person, y'know?"

"I'm on the fence with the whole recent flood of tattooing. So many people in the industry that I know just think it's awful. People that have



been in it for years and years and years. They're mad about it, saying it's being watered down, it's being made too commercial and mainstream, that it's selling out. They get upset about it and I absolutely get where they're coming from, because all of a sudden, out of nowhere, people are starting to capitalise on an industry that they don't belong to, and that makes them angry, because it's taking away from all the time and the effort that they've put into it. They feel like it's theirs, and

so to a certain degree it feels as if it's being stolen or taken away from them. That sucks, and I agree with it because people are beginning to take and not give back.

"People even say that about me. They tell me I'm selling out, going on a tattoo TV show, and all this stuff, but for me, from being on the show made me see the other side of it too. I'm not somebody from outside the industry capitalising on it, and taking something from you guys. I'm within 🍌



Steve Prue

the industry, I've spent time in it. I've tattooed just like everyone else out of a street shop for three years. I'm just trying to make a life for myself, and take that journey to the next level. All the people that I work with on the show have been in the industry for years, so I wish people would stop getting so mad about it.

"Sure the people that make these shows somewhat capitalise on it, and they make money from it, but they couldn't do it without our help, because they don't know anything about it. People look at it as being a secret that you don't share with people. And yeah, I understand that. I mean, I'm not on television teaching people how to tattoo. You see us doing tattoos, but in no way can you watch that show and learn how to tattoo, so we're not giving away those secrets. We're educating people. You know, you can't get a sleeve in one day. Sometimes a lot of the things that people ask for are unrealistic on certain parts of the

body, and it's good that we can educate them otherwise. It's good that we can do that. So there are both good and bad sides to it, but it depends simply on who you're talking to, and how it's affecting them personally. But I think people need to think less about how it affects them, and more about how they can effect it."

Before arriving at Wooster Street Social Club (the tattoo shop featured on NY Ink), Megan refers to two shops particularly that really made her grow as a tattoo artist. The first was in Reading, Pennsylvania, a shop called Colorwheel Tattoos. Although it was actually the fourth shop she worked in, it was somewhere where she stayed

I DON'T LIKE TO BE BOTHERED
WHEN I'M TATTOOING. BUT
IT TOOK THAT FEELING OF
STAGEFRIGHT AWAY. I NO
LONGER HAVE THOSE KINDS
OF FEELINGS





Steve Prue



for a couple of years and learnt a lot. It was where she began to really find out about the history of tattooing, particularly within that area of the States. Then she moved to Deep Six Laboratory in Philadelphia, which was her first time working in a big city. She stayed there for three or four years and learnt a lot, not only more about tattooing and various forms of art, but increasingly more about the

history. It was also when she began to really start to go out and work the conventions and meet other tattooers from around the world.

"Some people go to conventions because it's a way to make a lot of money really fast. Some people go to conventions because they want to go to seminars and they want to learn more about tattooing and be able to work in the same building as some of the same people that they admire the most, and they want that education. Some people go just because it's the only time that they will get to see all these other tattooers from all over the world. And I would say, that's mostly the reason I attend conventions."

Since moving to New York, Megan has also started to branch out into other forms of art. She has started DJing with her friend (who she has just started dating) Joey Letz of the band, Combichrist. They had known each other for a while but had never hung out properly until she arrived in the city. At the time Megan was already starting to think about other creative outlets and had always loved music. Joey was already a DJ and he told her that it was a lot of fun and a particularly good way of breaking into the music industry. So they formed

ON SOME DAYS IT'S COMPLETELY NORMAL, BUT THEN THERE ARE OTHER DAYS IT BECOMES REALLY OVERWHELMING BECAUSE THERE ARE LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE IN THERE WHO HAVE JUST COME IN TO SEE THE SHOP THAT IS ON THE SHOW

a DJ team called Letz Massacre and now play the clubs in New York, particularly electro/ industrial music: "We both like that kind of music, and it's the kind of music his band plays. Really, it was just a fun way to hang out and mess around with music, and make some money in our spare time. We just started doing that and then we ended up dating."

From watching NY Ink I'd also noticed Megan's obvious interest in fashion and so I asked her if that was another industry she'd considered going into. "I definitely really love fashion. It's a whole look. It's not just about the clothes, it's about how everything fits together. Make-up, shoes, nails, hair. For me, it's another form of art. It's a live installation as you're walking around." One of Megan's closest friends, Stephanie Paterek, has a clothing lines called NYC Sex Trash, who amongst others has made clothes for Lady Gaga and 🍌



Sex Trash Clothing

PEOPLE NEED TO MAKE AN EFFORT TO INFLUENCE TATTOOING AND WHERE THEY WANT IT TO GO, BECAUSE THAT WILL HELP MAINTAIN ITS INTEGRITY

Katy Perry. A lot of the clothes Megan wears on the show are also made by her, and Stephanie has educated Megan a lot in the fashion industry. "I'm totally into fashion and I'd love to found my own clothing line. I'm working on trying to get all that together."

Before NY Ink started, Megan had lived in Philadelphia for a few years, but would often go to New York as it was only a couple of hours drive away. So even before she was asked to be on the show she was already spending quite a lot of her time there despite the fact she had never really wanted to move there, as to her New York can be really intense. "It's not really the kind of place I pictured myself living in because I'd grown up in a small town. I actually kind of wanted to live in LA because I had a lot of friends out there. So I moved to LA, but after only three weeks there I got a call from the show telling me they wanted me to be on it.

And that was that!"

At the time Megan didn't know anyone on the show. Ami James, however, had already heard about her work through other people and when it came to deciding on a female tattooer for the show, "I guess my name just came to mind." The production company contacted her and asked if she'd be interested and for Megan it seemed like a good opportunity, something that was definitely worth exploring. "So, there I was in New York. I basically just moved my whole life there." It turned out to be a big adjustment for Megan. Having come from a small town to suddenly being in a big city, it was something that took some getting used to, particularly tattooing in front of cameras. "Tattooing is always my private bit of space. To let so many people in my private tattooing time was really, really stressful for me. It took me a while to get adjusted to it. I just don't like to be bothered when I'm tattooing. I had to go from not wanting to be bothered, to being okay with 20 people over my shoulder for hours and hours. But it took that feeling of stagefright away. I no longer have



those kinds of feelings.

"I only watched the first half of the first season," Megan admits to me, "because it's really hard to watch yourself on television. It makes you really nervous, you get embarrassed. You never watch yourself in public, you never see that much of yourself. I'd done modelling, but it's a lot different than seeing yourself walk around in your element everyday. It's just weird. It's bizarre. I never finished the first season. I mean, I know what happened in them so I don't need to watch them! I lived it. I've been trying to watch all of the second season and I think I've only missed one episode so far. It doesn't bother me as much. I'm better with it this time around because I'm more used to it. But it's still weird. I don't think it's ever going to feel completely normal. It's still really surreal."

Megan goes on to explain the complications of reality TV, as to whether or not it is an accurate portrayal of reality. She explains that you're seeing everything that has

happened over the course of a few months, edited into a much shorter time. "There's no possible way to have a 24-hour-long show. You're seeing the bones... the skeleton of it. You're seeing all the main parts. What you're seeing is real, it's happened. But a lot of times there's so much more to it, but it's impossible to get that much content into one show."

Megan puts the show's viewers into two categories: there are those that watch the show to see good artwork and tattooing; then there are those that want to know what they're doing, who's dating whom, the kind of people that like soap operas. "Everyone in television says that reality TV is the new soap opera. They don't have soap operas anymore, they have reality

from which is why I would hop from shop to shop, to meet people who were better than me and therefore learn something new. That's why the shop I worked at in Reading was so important, and the shop that I worked at in Philly, and now where I work in New York. I've worked with amazing tattoo artists. If I hadn't have worked in those places, I probably wouldn't have been able to handle working in New York. These guys keep me up to speed. They inspire me, they teach me, and we learn from each other. It's kind of a competition, but a good one."

I was keen to learn more about Megan's own tattooing and asked her if she was able to define it. "A lot of tattooers find their niche and stick to it – portraits, black and grey, realism,

I'VE WORKED WITH AMAZING TATTOO ARTISTS. IF I HADN'T HAVE WORKED IN THOSE PLACES, I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HANDLE WORKING IN NEW YORK

television. So it's about finding the right balance. People don't always just want to watch a documentary, they want to be entertained too."

Wooster Street Social Club at the end of the day is still a normal tattoo shop functioning like all other tattoo shops, Megan goes on to say. But you have to allow for the fact that there is this other side to it. "On some days it's completely normal, but then there are other days it becomes really overwhelming because there are literally hundreds of people in there who have just come in to see the shop that is on the show. To see the artists that from show and try and get their pictures taken with them, talk to them, etc. I work at that shop all the time. Not everybody does, but I do. So I see it a lot. Some days it just gets very overwhelming. It can get really crazy, so yeah, the show affected the tattoo shop. It makes me happy though.

"It's really important to be working with other artists who are at the top of their game. I think one of the reasons I went on the show is because of the standard of the other artists there. There was a point where I'd go to a new shop, quickly become the best and I wouldn't want to work there anymore, because although I was helping those people, I wasn't learning anything anymore. I needed to move so I could find others to learn

colour – but for me it's never been like that. I look at the guys around me and see what they're doing and I want to match them. I was doing the new school traditional style, but then I'd move to another shop, like the one in Reading where they were great at new school colour, and so I started to do that too. So I mastered it, then I moved to Philly and a lot of the guys that taught me, like Paul Acker who does a lot of realism, kind of that new school realism, really inspired me. He taught me everything there was to know about that. Then working in New York, there are a lot of guys around me doing really amazing black and grey. I've never really worked around artists like them until I came here, so I've started to improve my black and grey work, which makes me want to do it more. There are a lot of things about the guys at Wooster Street which I haven't experienced in other shops. They've been doing it for like 20 years, whereas most of the other people I've worked with had been doing it for maybe ten. And so I've learnt a lot of tricks behind the longevity of tattoos from the guys here. Every shop I've ever been to, my style has changed significantly because it's very heavily influenced by the people that I'm surrounded by. So I'd say that I like to think of my style as extremely versatile. I like to do it all, and I like to



be good at all of it.

"I also draw most of my tattoos. My drawing style is pretty new school, pretty illustrative. I kind of do 'cute, but creepy'. Everything is dead, but it's cute! Zombies, spiders, Halloween-type stuff, but it's always cute and not gruesome. I like to draw like that. And I love bright colours too. I haven't been able to paint as much as I'd like to ever since doing the show. It's hard to do everything that I want to do, considering everything that I have to do."

Megan wraps us up with some final thoughts on the tattoo industry and where it is today. "People need to make an effort to influence tattooing and where they want it to go, because that will help to maintain its integrity. I think that's really important and I do see more people doing that now within the industry. It's about speaking out to those people that don't know about it. Educate them in a way that they'll respect it. Instead of fighting change, we within the industry need to learn to embrace and influence it so it doesn't become completely lost and corrupted." 🐾



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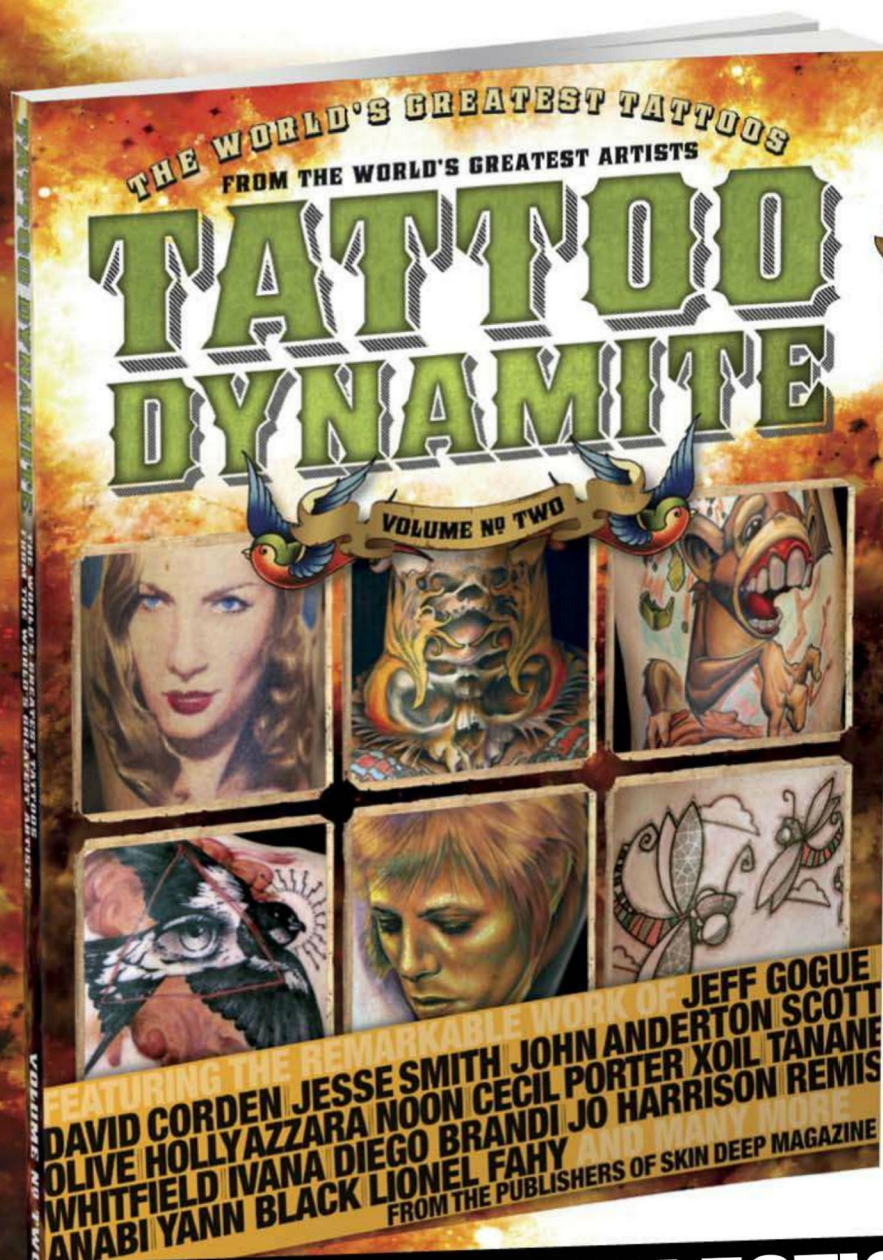
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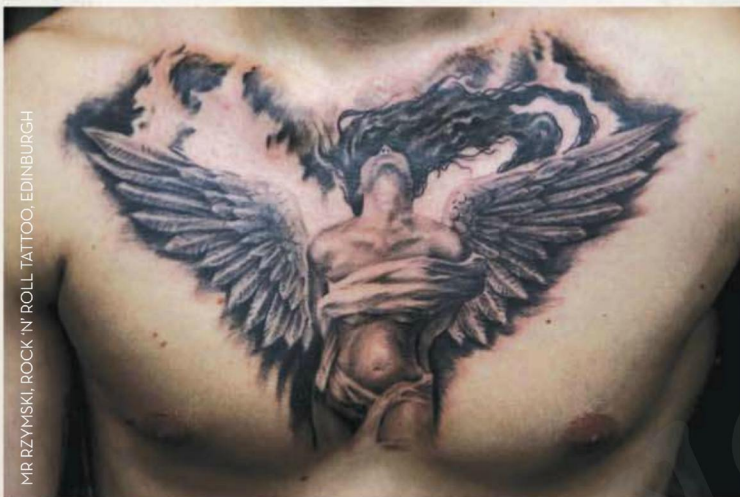
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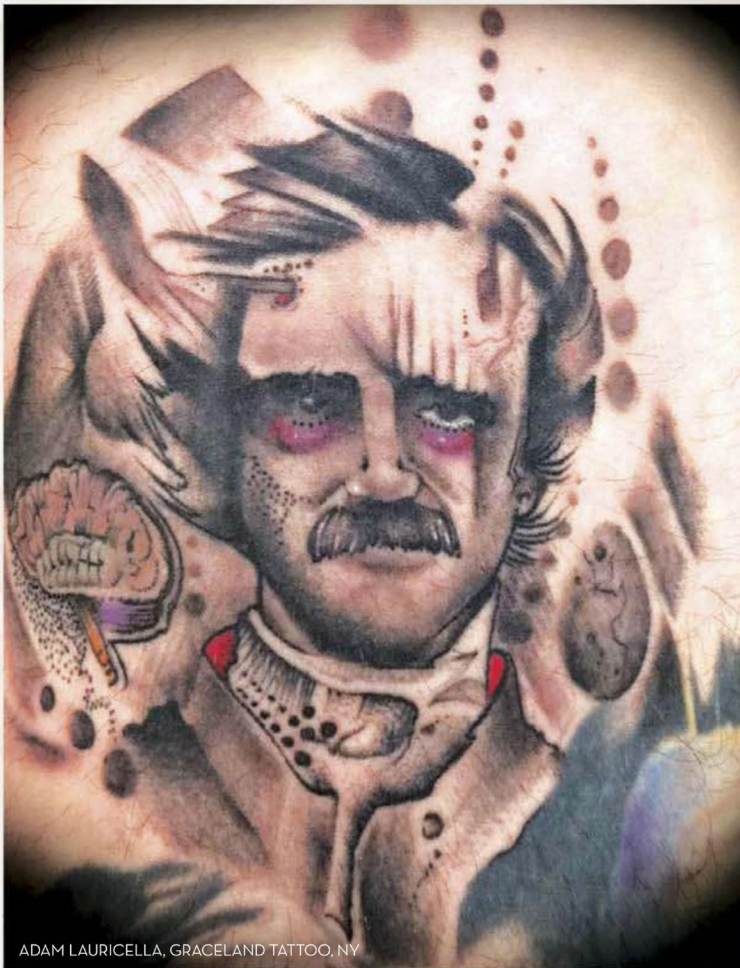
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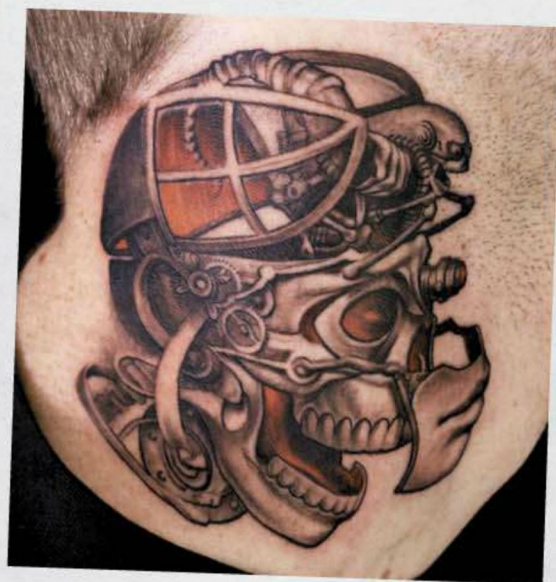
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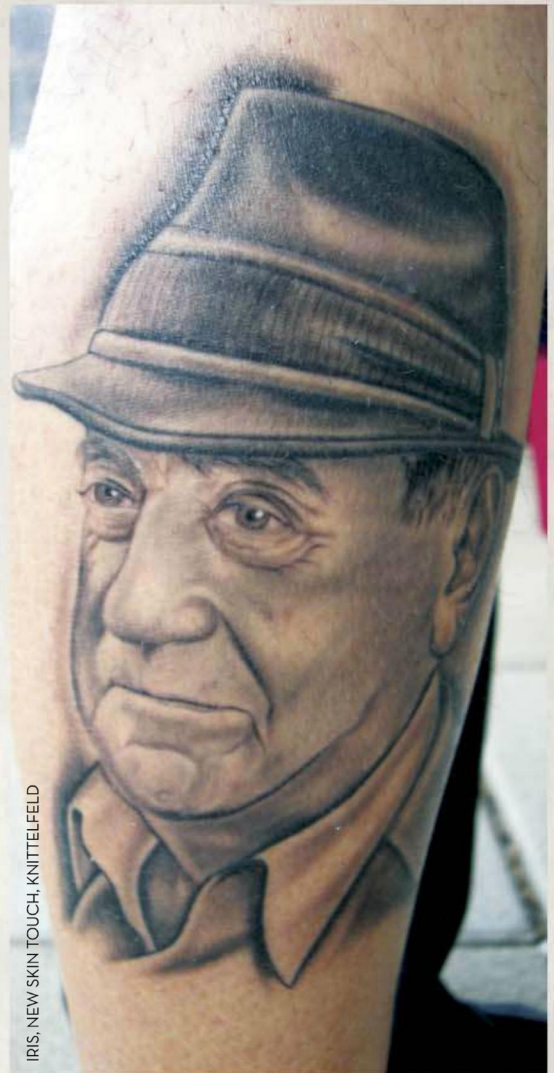
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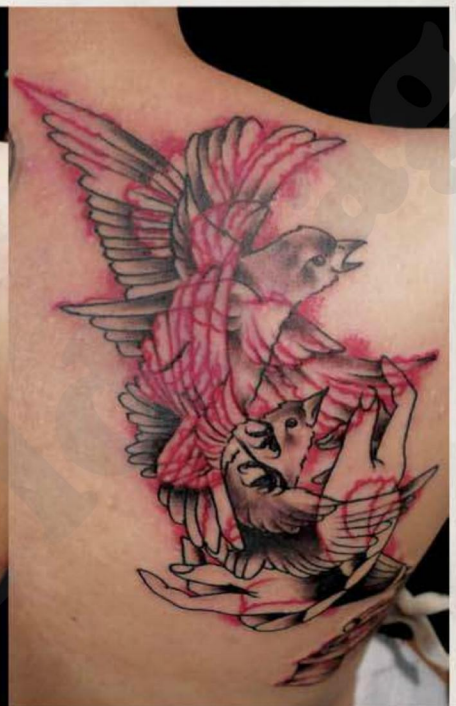
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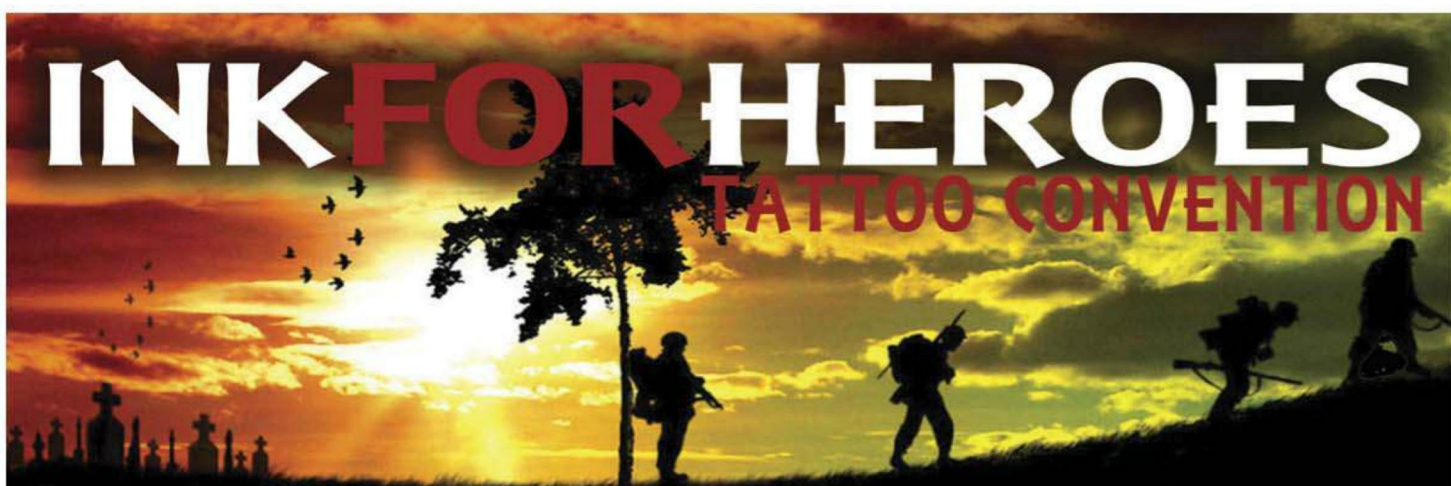
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Trent Aitken-Smith
Chantale Coady

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I've known Chantale Coady going on two years now and every time I've seen her she has either been bent over a stencil sheet coming up with a killer design or laying some ink down on a very happy client. And at other times, it's her name popping up on competition winner lists at conventions around the globe that catches my eye



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Finally getting around to finding out more about the person behind the tattoos, it becomes clear that in a world of continual flux, Chantale's presence in tattoo seems to be one of the few constants.

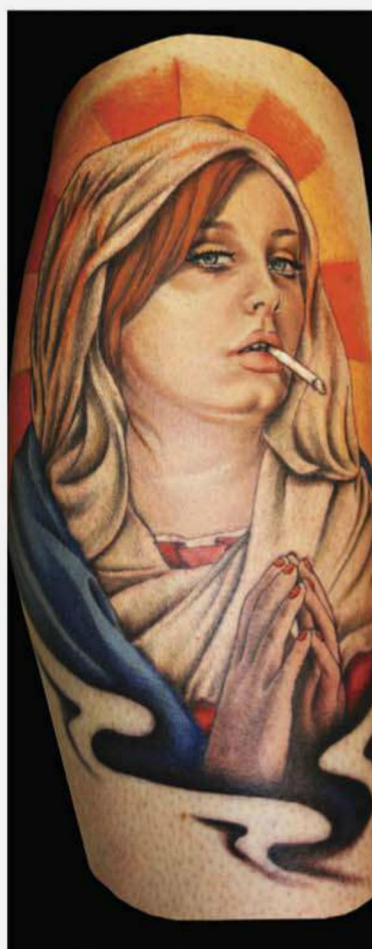
"Eversince I was little, I've sat on the sofa and drawn, even when everyone else was watching TV; my Mum used to buy me plain wallpaper to draw on because I would go through so much paper all the time. I always knew I wanted to be an artist of some kind, but it wasn't until I remember looking in a magazine one day and seeing a girl in tight leather trousers stood by a motorbike with a tattoo going around

her waist that it clicked. That same night, I designed something to go on my stomach and went to the local studio the next day and got it tattooed. I was 14 and hooked! I knew then that this was what I wanted to do.

"I'm still great friends with the artists and I used to go into that studio almost every weekend from that point, begging them for an apprenticeship; I would draw some flash for them and offer to be their general dogsbody, but they were having none of it. No matter how much I bugged them, they would not give me an apprenticeship. I still give them shit about it now and they say it's one of their biggest regrets."

And so began a journey that





would lead Chantale around the world, chasing that demon dragon of machines and ink.

"When I turned 20, I moved to Spain and managed to get an apprenticeship in a small studio, but unfortunately I had to move back to the UK as I had no money. I kind of gave up on my dream for a while thinking I would never get an apprenticeship and not wanting to go down the 'scratching up in my room' route.

"A few years later I moved to Australia with my now husband, Joel, who is Australian. Once there, I decided to study fine arts with the ambition of becoming an art teacher. I loved every second of my course and passed with distinctions. I was about to go on to my degree when Joel suggested I try getting an apprenticeship in tattooing again. It was like a flame inside me grew into a massive fire at the very thought. The next day I went to the local studio with my art portfolio and was offered an apprenticeship on the spot. When I called my Mum to tell her, she cried and screamed down the phone as she had always wanted me to become a tattoo artist."

Nothing like a loved one to give your arse a kick in the right direction – hey we all need it sometime – but unfortunately, Chantale was about to find out that there is a darker side to the tattoo world.

"I saved like crazy so that when I started in the studio, I had a set of good inks and equipment. My pride and joys were my Time Machine machines. They were Flatliners and came in their own coffins. I loved them!

"Everything started off great. I was in the studio five days a week and on my days off I worked as an assistant manager for a restaurant, working 16 hours a day. It was tiring but worth it. Unfortunately, the owner of the studio was only interested in making money and had me pick up my machines after a couple of weeks and start practicing. Three weeks later he told me I was ready to start tattooing clients. I went home terrified at the thought. I thought my apprenticeship was going to take a year and I felt I was not ready to tattoo paying clients. Also the man that was supposed to be teaching me didn't want to show me anything; I don't think he ever wanted to teach me but

I WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST OF SOME KIND, BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL I REMEMBER LOOKING IN A MAGAZINE ONE DAY AND SEEING A GIRL IN TIGHT LEATHER TROUSERS STOOD BY A MOTORBIKE WITH A TATTOO GOING AROUND HER WAIST THAT IT CLICKED

was made to by the boss. I stuck it out there for nearly a year but it got to the point that I didn't want to go in which made no sense as I was supposed to be doing my dream job.

"Then one day, Joel came home and told me he had been speaking to a lady that owned a studio – Platinum Ink – in Sydney. She wanted to meet me as she was looking for a new artist. After some persuasion I went to meet her. Her name was Jo and we got on straight away. She had just one artist working in the studio at the time, a girl called Jane. I knew that's where I wanted to work, but also knew the shit I was going to have to go through leaving where I was. I had been told stories of other tattooists who had their wrists broken when they tried to leave and how others just grabbed their stuff and disappeared. I have 🙄

always prided myself on being honest, so decided to do the honest thing. I organized a meeting with the owner and told him to his face how I was unhappy and that I was moving on. I offered to finish any jobs I had ongoing and that in the future if he ever wanted me to cover any artists, I would try to help out. He said he was cool with it and wished me luck. I was so happy and relieved I went straight back to work, only to be thrown out at the end of the day, being threatened that if I didn't move out of the area I would

I WAS ABOUT TO GO ON TO MY DEGREE WHEN JOEL SUGGESTED I TRY GETTING AN APPRENTICESHIP IN TATTOOING AGAIN. IT WAS LIKE A FLAME INSIDE ME GREW INTO A MASSIVE FIRE AT THE VERY THOUGHT



indeed get my wrists broken. They stole all of my stuff. I didn't even own a pencil by the time I got home."

Thankfully for Chantale, and the tattoo community as a whole, her new boss Jo was to prove that the good win out, and helping a fellow artist in need, was how they would work together. "I called Jo and told her what happened and that I had no machines (my pride and joys) and so couldn't start work. She told me to be in the studio the next day where she sat me at her computer, told me to buy everything I needed using her card and I could pay her back whenever. Three days later I was back tattooing and in heaven; Jane, who I was working alongside, was awesome and became one of my best mates, Jo was a dream, and soon to come along was a shop apprentice, called Laura, who was a total nightmare – she was like the worst little sister ever but we loved her. It was a great little family. Whilst working there, an artist called Mikael Schelen, from Sweden, came in did a guest spot for a few weeks. While he was in the studio, I literally sat on his shoulder the whole time watching everything he did and asking 100 stupid questions an hour. I learned so much from him – he is quite honestly my idol and mentor. I get tattooed by him every year at the London Convention, and every time, I



go home having learnt more. I never stop learning. We all have a laugh together and swap tips and secrets at conventions, so when I get back in to the studio I'm buzzing with new ideas and knowledge.

"Then one day I got the dreaded phone call to tell me my Dad had died. I flew home the next day. After a couple of weeks, I was back in Oz and working again, but the homesickness became too much. I just wanted to be closer to my family, so Joel and I moved back to the UK. I still go back to Platinum Ink every March and do a guest spot and work the Sydney Convention with them. I miss them like crazy!"

Back on home turf, Chantale found a new, brief, home at Timeless Ink before moving on to her current studio, Electric Vintage.

"I was there for just under two years

before I moved on. I am now working at Electric Vintage in Bath and loving it. I am also the studio manager there and Sara – the owner – is amazing. She reminds me of Jo back in Oz. I have a great team around me; Jesse Rynor and Vicky Hooper tattooing, Sal Acquaviva piercing, along with apprentices, Danni and Mandy; we have a riot in there together.

"Joel, he's just as obsessed with tattooing as I am even though he isn't a tattoo artist. He comes to every convention with me and goes off and chats and helps all the other artists, occasionally bringing them over to meet me. I actually think he has more friends in the industry than me! I'm so extremely lucky to have a husband as supportive as he is."

And that wraps up Chantale's journey; not only taking her from England to Australia and back, but also through the good and the bad of this crazy community of tattooists. And the future? It might be a little more settled, but knowing Chantale, there is much more to come – she has already made herself known by winning Best of Convention at this year's Tattoo Freeze. So if you see Chantale at a convention, no doubt hunkered over her next design, pop by and say hello... and if she's busy, Joel's always about to get the party going. 🍀

"JOEL, HE'S JUST AS OBSESSED WITH TATTOOING AS I AM EVEN THOUGH HE ISN'T A TATTOO ARTIST. HE COMES TO EVERY CONVENTION WITH ME AND GOES OFF AND CHATS AND HELPS ALL THE OTHER ARTISTS. OCCASIONALLY BRINGING THEM OVER TO MEET ME"



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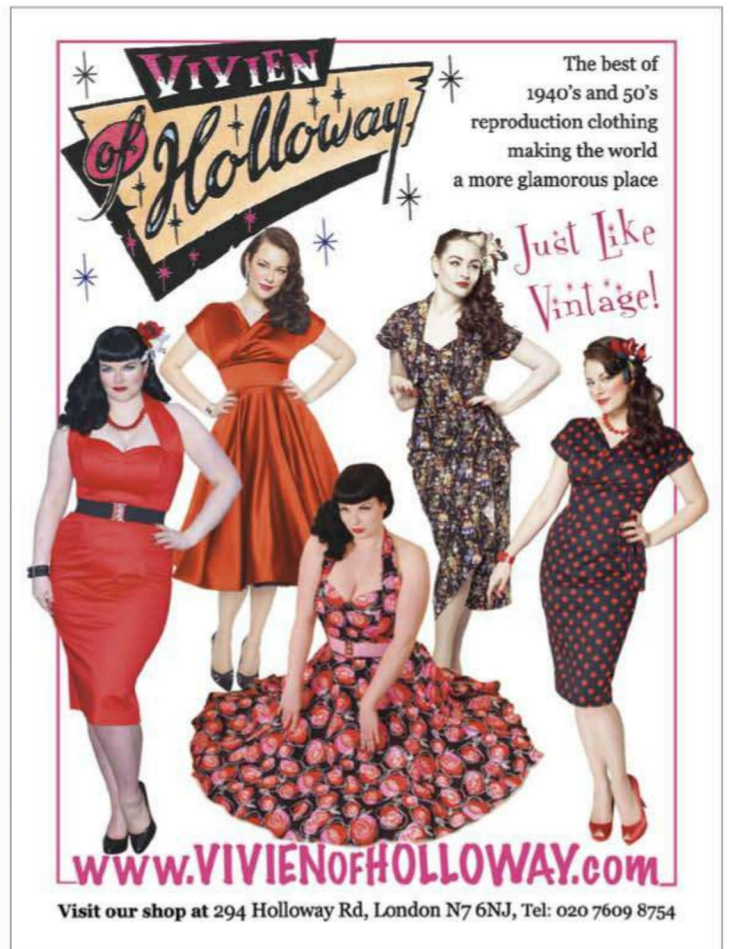
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PART ONE

Quite publicly, I have gone on record as saying great writers are born not made. Sure, I've taken my fair share of heat – normally from students staring down the barrel of £30k of debt – but I still believe it to be true. When the money runs out, who will you find still writing? The born or the made? The same is true of photographers, on which note, allow me to parade Dirk Behlau before your eyes

originally came across Dirk's work when working with Scary Guy a few months back – although now I come to check that fact, I see it was nearly a year ago. It's not as simple as you think to shoot somebody who has a personality to take care of. Timing is everything – and I suspect that the more you work with people like this, the more you become aware of your sixth sense doing a lot of the work for you. You get to instinctively know what is likely to happen next and be ready for it.

Dirk is one of those guys and he somewhat backs up my statement of

'born not made'. Having hung out with Dirk for a little while and seen him action, it's clear to me that he doesn't even think about what would make a good photograph. He doesn't think about framing and is probably only marginally aware of the technicalities behind what he's doing.

The genius of Dirk is that he simply thinks 'photography'. He sees the subject and knows what he wants his work to look like at the end of the session – from there on, it's simply a matter of letting yourself be driven by time and space. Yeah, I know. I make it sound like a dark art best





DON'T LET YOUR BRAIN DO THE WORK - LET YOUR FEELINGS GUIDE YOU. I USE THE CAMERA LIKE I'M SHOOTING A MOVIE, TRYING TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE AND A SPECIAL FEELING

left to those who have sold their souls. Maybe that's how it should be. Since every mobile phone under the sun has a camera on it these days, the world and his dog seems to think they can make the grade given half a chance.

"Actually my goal is always to get the best out of the person I work with. Make them look good, larger than life, epic, stylish, iconic. I don't have a special concept before a shoot and I always try not to think about what I'm doing while shooting.

"I like to be kind of unprepared and spontaneous. It's more about getting into the flow of the action, getting in the mood. Don't let your brain do the work - let your feelings guide you. I use the camera like I'm shooting a movie, trying to create an atmosphere and a special feeling. It often happens that I say out loud, 'wow, great shot!' during a session because to see a good shot makes me happy immediately. The shots have to convince me in the first place otherwise I won't publish them. I'm not producing photos in a way people may expect it. I'm shooting them the way I love them."

See. I was telling the truth. And when you think about it, how else are you ever going to make a name for yourself if you're not doing the kind of work that makes you happy. You're a long time in the game if you're going to play by somebody else's rules. Being as 🍌

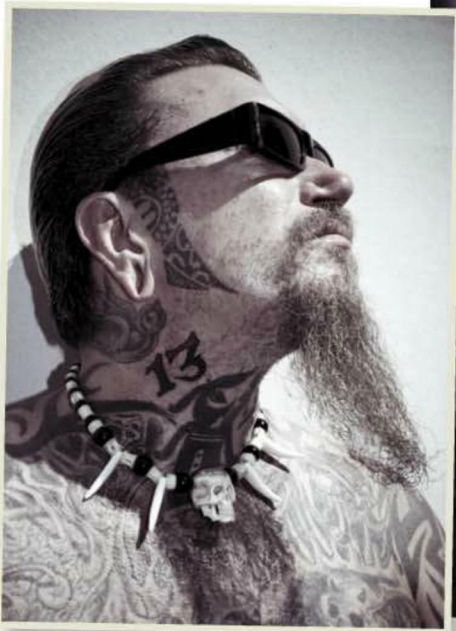
DIRK ON HIS KIT

I mainly work on location, I personally don't like studio stuff. I always try to carry the least amount of equipment with me as possible - mainly just a camera and two lenses. If I do bigger indoor productions, I have an assistant to take care of the light set-up. At the moment I shoot with a Canon 5D Mark II and a 7D, but actually, I think that the gear is not that important. It's the craft not the tool.

I often post quick 'n' dirty iPhone shots on Facebook while shooting and a lot of people then ask what kind of equipment and lenses I used for that shot. So if I need to grab a tool, the latest iPhone would work for a lot of stuff and few will recognize the difference. So if I had to give any advice to a non-professional photographer, I would recommend the latest iPhone because it's basically what you need to take shots - I use it myself for all non commercial shots I do in private.







I GET A LOT OF REQUESTS FROM MODELS – MALE AND FEMALE – WHO WANT TO WORK WITH ME, BUT I'M QUITE SELECTIVE AND I'M NOT DOING MANY 'TFP-SHOOTS' BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF TIME

Dirk has been doing this for one hell of a long time now, I wonder exactly how much forging his own path influences what he's able to do now.

"I get a lot of requests from models – male and female – who want to work with me, but I'm quite selective and I'm not doing many 'TFP-Shoots' because of the lack of time.

"From time to time there are models like Victoria van Violence, who you had on the cover some issues ago, who contacted me when she started modeling and I immediately see the talent in the person. But this is kind

of rare. Most of the shootings are clients' work and I often combine them with shots for my own output.

"Bands and other clients contact me because they have seen my photos somewhere, come across one of my books, or just by the word of mouth. It's been like this for six or seven years now. Clients are coming from everywhere because I never focused on just one subject."

One thing that stands out in Dirk's work with tattoo is his ability to capture masculine and feminine character traits in a way that you

certainly don't see everyday. I kind of had it in the back of my mind to ask him if this was purposeful, but I really don't need to anymore, but on that subject, we try to elaborate a little as we talk about framing the subject in the mind's eye.

"It just happens that way. Whether

DIRK ON STARTING OUT

One of my first professional pin-up shoots was with Swiss Zoe Scarlett, who was at the beginning of her career. It was actually my first shoot with a traditional hot rod as well – it was raining the whole day. We met at a drag racing track in Germany during a Drag Racing event. She was a crew member of a Pro-Mod racing team and we only had half-an-hour. When we shot, the sun came out and we produced some really good stuff which went on five different magazine covers worldwide.





WHETHER A GIRL OR GUY I ALWAYS TRY TO MAKE THEM LOOK TIMELESS TO ALLOW THE PHOTO TO STAND THE TEST OF TIME

a girl or guy, I always try to make them look timeless to allow the photo to stand the test of time. A lot of people also want to work with me because they know they will get a lot of media noise as well, which pushes their career..."

He leaves the comment hanging, which is fair. That's part of the game of getting on in your chosen field, and it's perfectly valid for those who can live with working like that, but it wasn't always like this. As with all lone-gunmen, it's hard work digging the path as you go along.

"I started out shooting hotels, interiors and other design-related themes. About eight years ago, I started focusing more on the whole rock 'n' roll world with fast cars, pin-ups, rock bands – one day I found that it all just came together for me. I worked, and still work, for a lot of design and lifestyle, hot rod and motorcycle mags around the globe. I never really pushed it that way, but I've been very active in the graphic design field for over 15 years now and people already know me. I really can't explain it. I always just did what I love and with a lot of passion. 🍀"

More from Dirk next issue.



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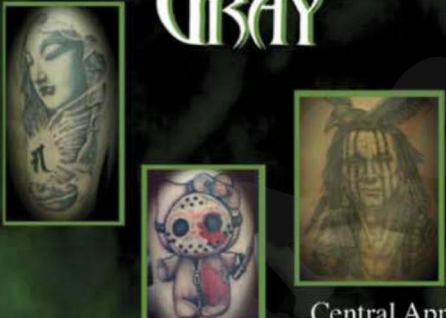
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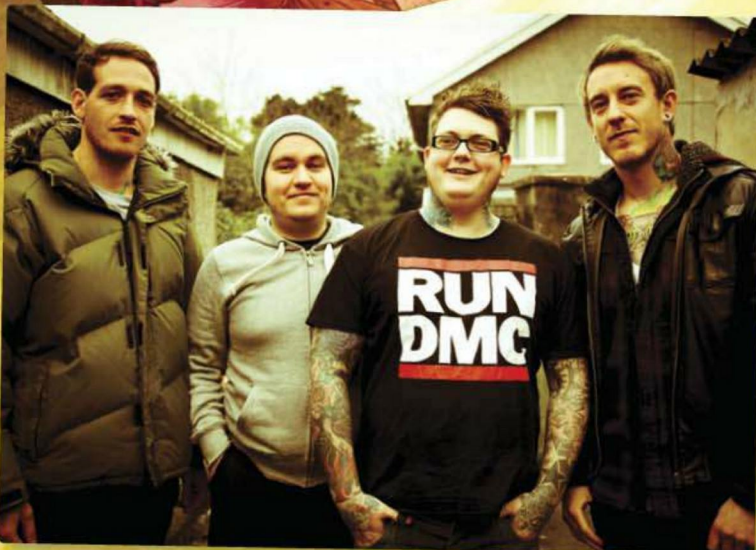
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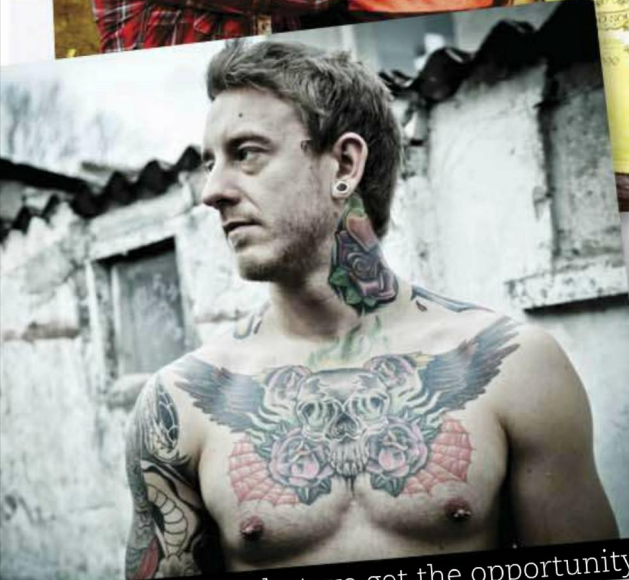
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MAIN TEXT:
Trent Aitken-Smith
INCIDENTALS: Mr. Smith
Kayla Wren



A few months back, I wrote an article on Nipper Williams of Bridgend Tattoo Studio. At the time I remember thinking that it would be cool to do a bigger feature on Nipper and the studio. I began chatting with Ronnie Huxford, the studio manager, and it came about that the studio had some clients whose names were certainly worth dropping around. Namely the two Welsh mega-bands, Funeral For A Friend, and Bullet For My Valentine.

Over the next few months, Ronnie and I began the process of getting both bands into the studio at the same time for some ink. At first, we



It's not often that we get the opportunity to mess around with the logistics of a busy studio and two touring and recording monster metal bands, but fuck with the system we have, and now proudly present you with

FOUR ~~WEDDINGS~~ BULLETS & A FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND

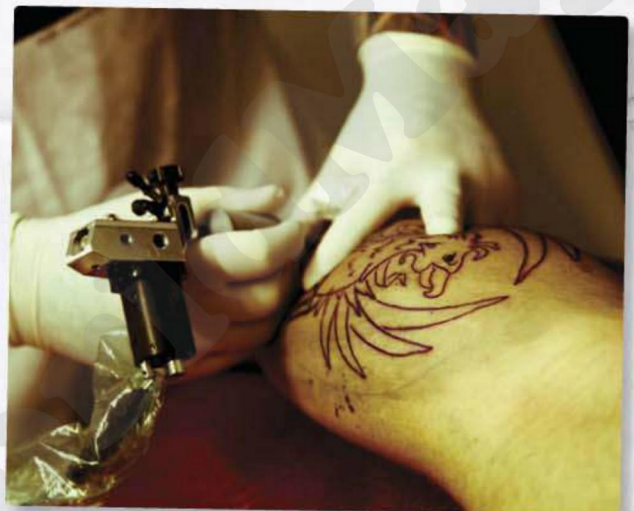
figured it would be an easy task, but with tour schedules, recording time and personal commitments, it was a little harder than we thought. Finally though, we got the date set and with a promise of both bands in the studio, I found myself hitting the motorway to get down to Bridgend.

When I arrived at 102 Nolton Street, Bridgend, to a very unassuming shop front, I was greeted by Ronnie and introduced to a group of people who were 'hanging' about the studio. It turns out that these 'people' were Matt, Moose, and Jay from Bullet For My Valentine, and Ryan, Gav, and Richard from Funeral For A Friend.

Now I knew these guys were from

the two bands, but not being into them, I promptly forgot their names – sorry lads, no offence, but my taste in music is a little more, um, quieter. As the morning progressed, we got the photo shoot out the way and got down to the business of chatting.

Bridgend Tattoo Studio started off its life as Skin 'n' Ink, and it was in the early '90s that Nipper joined the crew. "Nipper was a freelance artist," Ronnie tells me, "which included airbrushing motorcycle helmets and jackets. At that time, David, his brother, popped into a tattoo studio wearing a jacket that Nipper had painted. The owner instantly fell in love with the artwork and suggested that Nipper



should drop in for a chat. After firstly declining an apprenticeship due to lack of funds, it wasn't long before he had a change of heart and accepted."

"I started completely at the bottom of the ladder," continues Nipper. "A proper old school apprenticeship. I was taking bookings, drawing flash and cleaning. A lot of the time I'd be sitting there for hours making needles

– I love making needles. My boss was a git, but in a good way! I remember once he even got me to clean the toilet with a toothbrush, but all this made me understand how much I really wanted to be a tattooist."

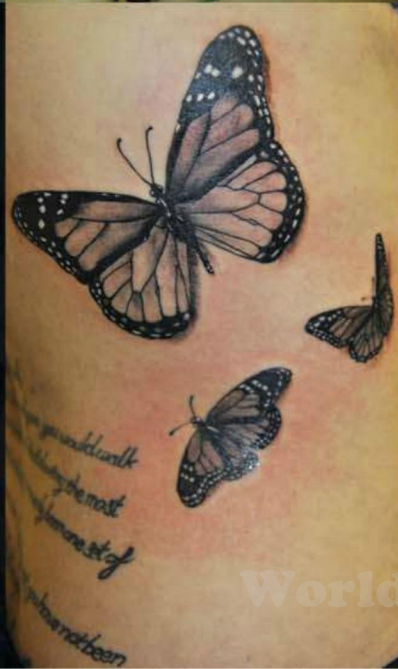
Nipper managed to secure an artist chair at Skin 'n' Ink which led to him travelling to places like Thailand and Israel, continuously trying to master his trade before returning to keep building his clientele. Up to this point, Nipper had also formed friendships with a lot of people on the local music scene, either popping in for a tattoo from Bridgend college, or at jam nights and local shows where Nipper enjoyed playing guitar. In 2002, the owner upped sticks to set up a studio

in Spain, leaving Nipper and fellow artist, Billy, the option to take over the business. This was a fresh start and they decided to change the name to Bridgend Tattoo Studio. Sadly after a year, Billy had a very bad motorcycle accident and his recovery period was unsure, so they agreed that Nipper would go it alone.

And so began Bridgend's life with Nipper at the wheel. The years went by with Nipper slogging it out on his own before Chris Harrison joined the studio in 2010.

"It was a kind of hard time," says Chris. "Circumstances at my previous studio forced me to leave, but it was a stroke of luck when I met the boys several weeks later on a night out and

WHEN NIPPER CAME ON OUR US TOUR, WE STARTED MY LEG SLEEVE OF THE MUPPETS: GONZO WAS THE FIRST ADDITION. NIPPER ALSO DID A VERY SPECIAL TATTOO COMBINING BULLET AND AVENGED SEVENFOLD, WHICH ALL MEMBERS OF BOTH BANDS HAD! PRETTY SWEET. MOOSE:BFMV





MY FIRST WAS A CELTIC SIGN ON MY ANKLE JUST TO SEE WHAT IT FELT LIKE, AND A CELTIC BAND ON MY ARM TOO BECAUSE ALL MY FRIENDS HAD THEM! YOUNG AND FOOLISH, I'VE NOW COVERED THEM UP WITH ART THAT MEANS SOMETHING TO ME - SCARS OF MY LIFE I LIKE TO CALL THEM. JAY, BFMV

we really hit it off. A couple of weeks later, Nipper offered me a job and my own room at the studio. This break enabled me to develop my technique faster than ever. I'd been interested in tattooing from a very young age – always hanging out whenever I could in tattoo studios, constantly drawing and knocking on every door until someone would give me a chance. At 19 and in my home town of Merthyr, I finally got that chance.”

Chris then went on to work in several Welsh and European studios, picking up awards along the way.

“I remember two years ago meeting Gav, FFAF guitarist. He had a ‘time and space’ themed sleeve. I was like, ‘Wow that’s cool who did it?’, and he replied, ‘Nipper at Bridgend’. And now I get to put cool ideas on him. I love

what I can do with a colour pallet and I’m discovering new techniques every day. It helps that my girlfriend is an artist too as it encourages me even more, plus I have learned so much from her – somehow she has brought the drawing skills out in me (Rianne, Chris’ girlfriend, did all the artwork for Funeral For A Friend’s latest album, *The Young and the Defenceless*).”

A year later and Ronnie Huxford joined the growing team at Bridgend as Nipper’s business partner. Ronnie, a musician himself, had shown keen support to the studio while on or off tour for the past seven years, joining the list of many from the Welsh music scene to be tattooed by Nipper. “I needed someone to push the business,” explains Nipper. “It was getting to the point where I couldn’t





FRIENDS AND FAMILY ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO ME, AND I'VE GOT ALL THAT HERE IN BRIDGEND, SO THERE'S REALLY NO NEED TO GO ELSEWHERE.

TO BE HONEST, THERE'S PROBABLY NOWHERE BETTER IN THE WORLD AT THE MOMENT THAN SOUTH WALES FOR PRODUCING GREAT BANDS. SOMETHING WHICH ALSO GOES FOR TATTOO ARTISTS! RYAN, FFAF

do both – run the business and tattoo. Ronnie seemed the perfect choice. He's an ace drummer who's totally driven. He's a good shop manager and has a real love for the tattoo industry. Overall a great partner – in business, not in life – that sounded a bit wrong! It also meant I could spend more time improving my tattooing and know that the business is in safe hands."

"It just made sense to go into business with Nipper due to the

history we have," adds Ronnie. "Also, the addition of Chris to the studio was a massive motivation for both myself and Nipper. It was our body piercer, Ricki Duncan from BtS Body Modification, who first pointed us towards Chris's work a year ago after a tattoo session with him."

With the right artists in the studio and Ronnie running the business side of things, it was all systems go for Bridgend Tattoo Studio. The clients kept coming, and among them, the guys from Bullet and Funeral. Their friendship and trust in the studio became so strong that Bullet even invited Nipper to join them for two weeks of their 'Uproar' tour of the States in 2011.

"It was unreal, the boys looked after me so well. I got to live the dream, staying on Hollywood Boulevard, watching four guys that I have known since they were nothing more than

kids, perform to sold out arenas. I got to put some lovely work on Matt, Moose and Jay, and even dropped a tour tattoo onto some of the Avenged Sevenfold boys who were also very kind to me. Being able to dive into the Rainbow for a beer and walking into the House of Blues to see Steel Panther was a dream. I can't thank them enough and look forward to many more adventures."

"Me and the Bullet boys go way back," adds Ronnie. "I remember being thrown out of a French lesson for drumming on my desk while sharing an old Walkman, listening to Megadeth, with Moose (drummer for BFMV)."

"Moose had a reaper tattoo done out in the States," interrupts Nipper. "He asked me to re-colour it, and halfway through I realised his reaper had six fingers! I am really enjoying Matt's sleeve at the moment; it has

taken a while to plan out and our schedules don't help, but I'm so close to finishing it. I can't wait!

"All the bands show great support to the studio, whether they wear our shop tee at Download attracting new clientele, but one thing never changes and that's their personality. We always look forward to their homecomings – having spent months on the road, just to sit there and have a beer and talk rubbish. It shows they haven't changed."

"I really love the sleeve that I'm currently doing on Ryan," says Chris. "It has been great getting to know him – and going to watch WWE too... good times! We want to be the best we can be, giving people the best service we can provide and an awesome experience thrown into the deal as well. You know, the world is supposed to end this year, so I'm going to work like a dog to try and

achieve all my goals. If it doesn't end, that's OK. I'll have gotten a lot done!"

Having hung out for the morning with the bands and the artists, it's obvious that the relationship is more than simply music and ink. These

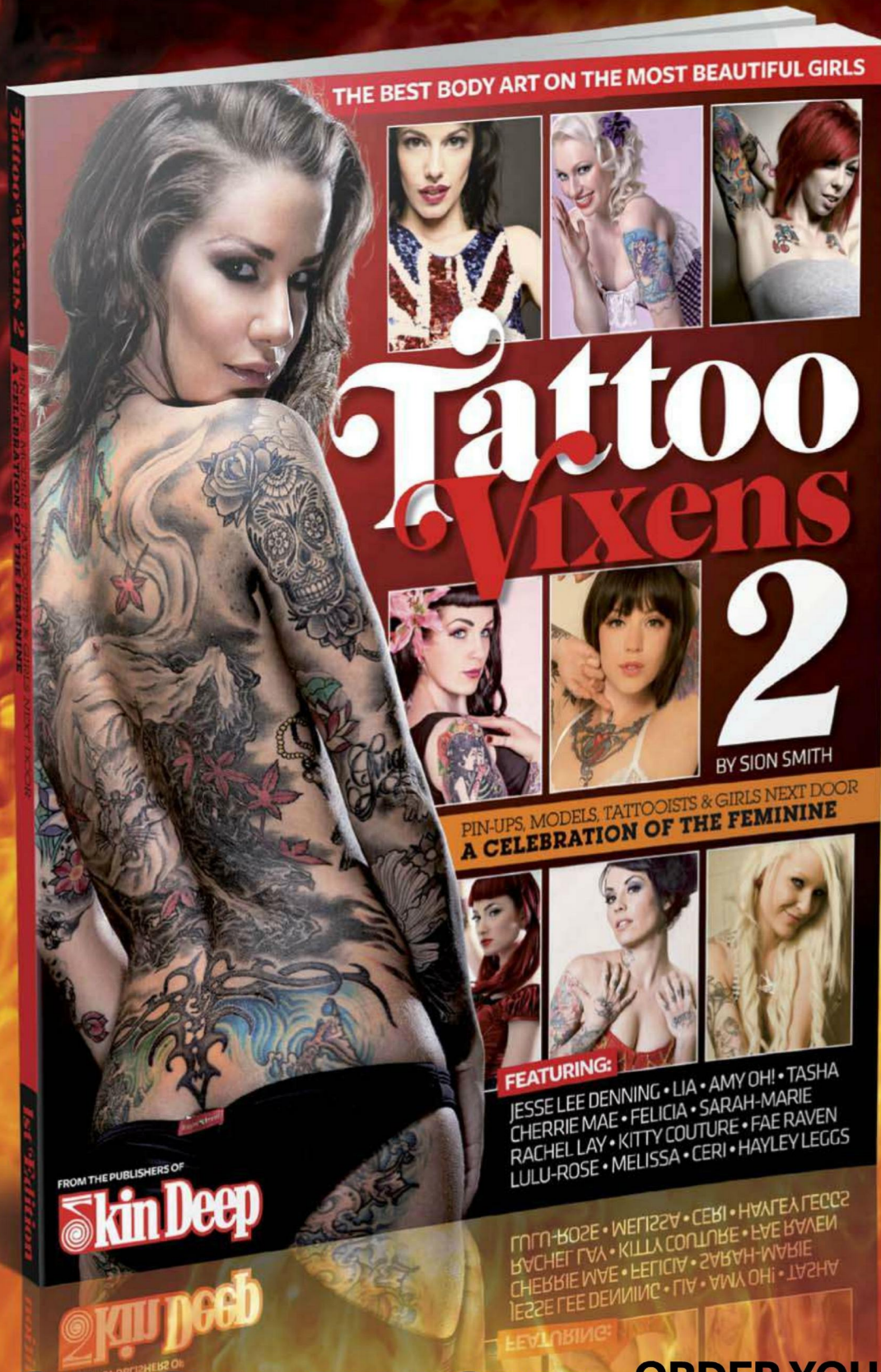
guys are close, long-time friends, all with a mutual respect for their different fields, which is a good thing, right? The talent coming from all corners in this equation is quite simply, off the scale. 🐾



CHRIS HARRISON



WE'RE BACK!



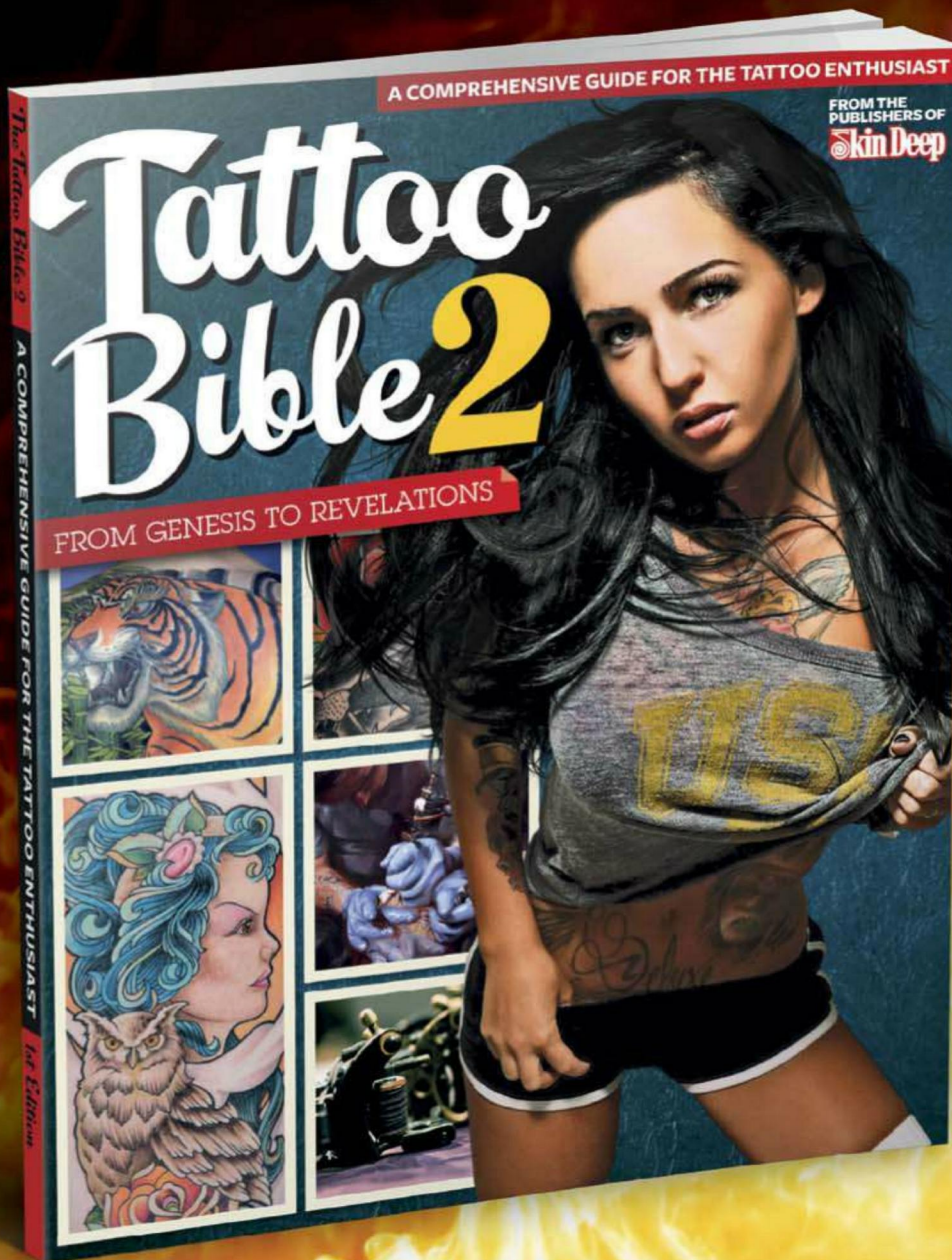
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THE NEW TESTAMENT



When we published Volume One of *The Tattoo Bible*, tattooing was at a point of immense popularity. Who would have thought twelve months on that its popularity would grow into an even bigger global phenomenon? It is as much a part of popular culture today as our favourite TV shows, films and musicians. Along with that popularity comes a thirst for knowledge and a need for a respected source to answer those questions.

In this – *The Tattoo Bible 2* – we once again bring you the essential information you need to make good decisions when it comes to getting your first tattoo. You'll also find great advice from respected writers and tattoo artists. We look at everything you need to know if you're a tattoo virgin thinking about your first time, right across the board to how to get on the road to becoming a tattoo artist yourself and the right way to go about it.

We talk to respected international tattoo artists, look at the role the media has played in the sudden growth in popularity, arm you with a history of the art and discuss the different schools of tattooing. We look at the best in aftercare advice, give an overview of the international convention scene and how you can use it to your advantage and lift the lid on cover-ups. Of course - it wouldn't be a Skin Deep spin-off if we didn't lavish it with some outstanding photography and drop in a few of our best ever features to make this volume an even more collectible edition than the first.

Ultimately, *The Tattoo Bible 2* presents you with a fantastic worldview on the industry as it stands today. Just because we're having fun doesn't mean we're not taking it seriously!

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A comprehensive guide for the tattoo enthusiast

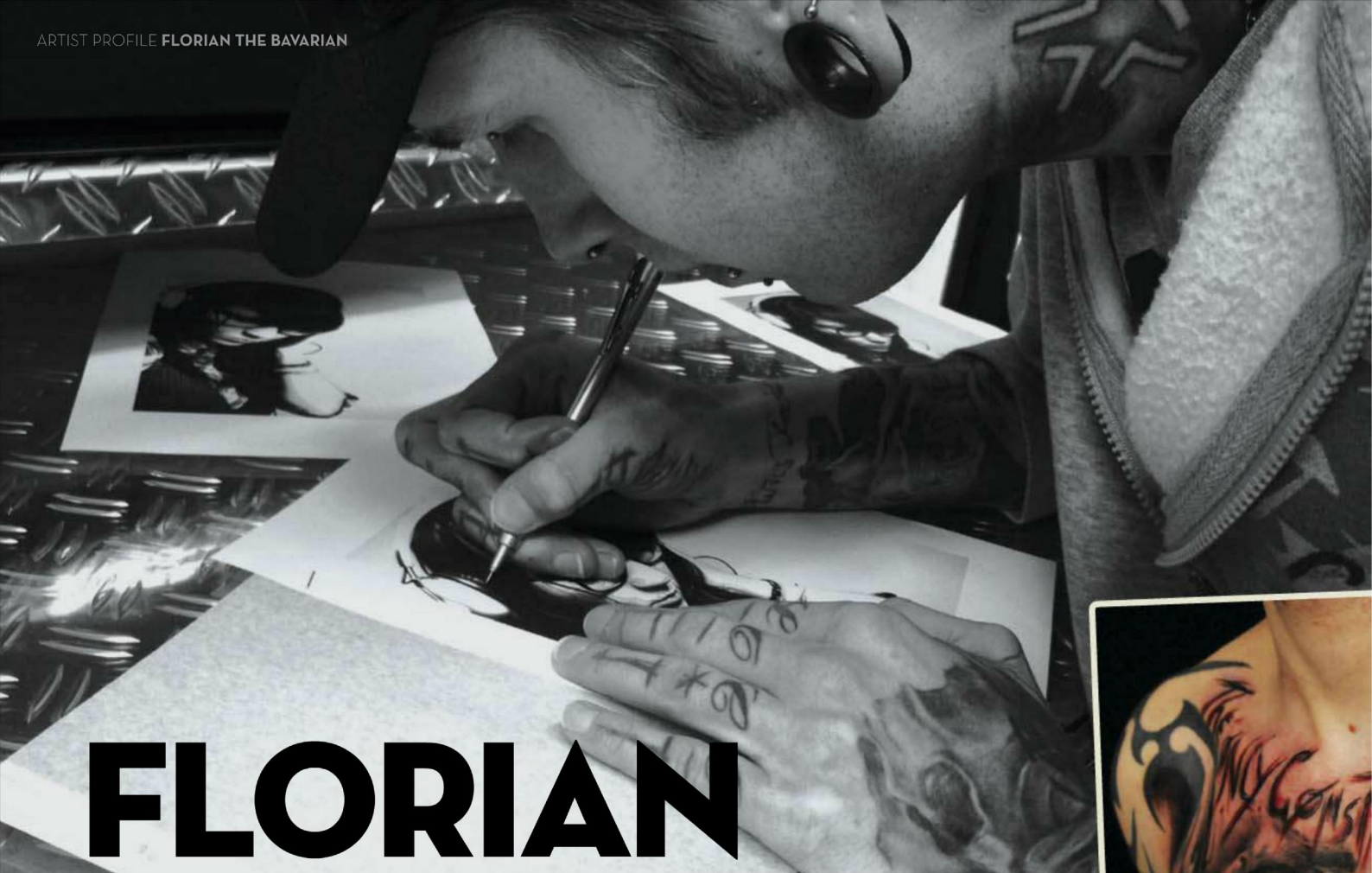
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FLORIAN

THE BAVARIAN

Hiding out in a tiny village in the mountains of Bavaria, south Germany, Florian Karg has been quietly banging out tattoos that have been impressing collectors the world over. We managed to infiltrate this, normally private tattooist's lair, getting him to wax lyrical about his amazing work



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tattoo-circle@web.de

Trent Aitken-Smith
 Florian Karg

SO, FIRST OFF, HOW DID YOUR LOVE OF ALL THINGS INK COME ABOUT?

I have been tattooing since I was about 18 years old... so about six years now. For a couple of years before that, when I was still in school, I started to study and learn more about tattooing; the whole tattoo scene and the craft. Art class was always my favourite in school, so I started to draw and create tattoo designs from an early age. But I grew up in the country where tattoos were rare, not holding any respect.

WITH YOUR HOME TOWN FROWNING ON TATTOO CULTURE, HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT GETTING YOURSELF TRAINED UP?

I started out by tattooing myself, I never did an apprenticeship. I tried to figure it all out by myself. I watched other artists

at conventions to learn how to tattoo. But I definitely wanted to become a tattooist, so I just did it and eventually opened up my own shop. It was a really hard time at the beginning; I held two jobs for almost two years so that I was able to pay my rent.

TELL US A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE STUDIO AND ITS LOCATION.

Our studio is in a little village near a cow barn in Weiler, Bavaria, in southern Germany. As I mentioned before, it is in a very countrified region near the Alps, not far away from Austria. It is a very quiet and nice place, without stress and perfect for being on vacation. So we're not a typical walk-in shop in the middle of a town. There are two artists in the





I HAVE PAINTED ON HUMAN BONES AND ANIMAL SKULLS BEFORE. I FIND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PAINTING AND TATTOOING IS NOT SO BIG AS FAR AS THE DESIGN IS CONCERNED, BUT THE PROCESS IS QUITE DIFFERENT

shop, myself and a buddy of mine, Robert. I met Robert a year after I opened the studio. He came

in and asked me if it was possible to work with me and I thought, 'why not?' He was able to draw very well and he was a nice guy. He has worked in the shop for almost five years and we have become really good friends. I think a big part of it is because we've built up this shop from nothing and we did it all by ourselves.

YOUR STUDIO SOUNDS LIKE IT IS IN A REALLY REMOTE AND SMALL AREA, HOW DOES THIS WORK OUT WITH NOT HAVING THE REGULAR POOL OF WALK-IN CLIENTS AVAILABLE?

Most of our clients come from far away and combine a holiday in the area with getting their tattoo. That works really well as the clients are really relaxed when they get here. I

had never thought about opening a shop. I tattooed at home, but as I got more and more customers, it became necessary to open up the shop.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT MOVING TO A MORE 'ACCESSIBLE' STUDIO IN A CITY?

I love to be outside, to take a walk and to enjoy our countryside and nature. I like that I can walk about in nature after a days work. It relaxes me and brings me back down to earth. I like to be with friends and have a good time, but mostly I'm working to improve myself. So I guess, the answer is no. I like it where I am.

Paul and I visit Austria and Switzerland, but most of the time for conventions. We love to visit conventions in general. It's always a great chance to talk to other tattooers and have a look at their work, and it's perfect to get inspiration and show your work to potential customers as well. 🍷

I'VE SEEN SOME OF YOUR ARTWORK – I ASSUME THIS IS A BIG PART OF YOUR LIFE, ALONGSIDE TATTOOING?

I am an artist as well as a tattoo artist. I spend most of my time working in the shop. I love to draw and to paint. A lot of different art and mediums appeal to me; I love to paint with oil or acrylic on various backgrounds, such as canvas or paper and even skateboards. I really enjoy doing graffiti on canvas or walls. Sometimes on whatever I can find. I have painted on human bones and animal skulls before. I find the difference between painting and tattooing is not so big as far as the design is concerned, but the process is quite different. Also,

when working on skin for tattooing, everything is smaller whereas with paintings, your scope is thrown wide open. For example, on a wall you can do a face maybe three metres big!

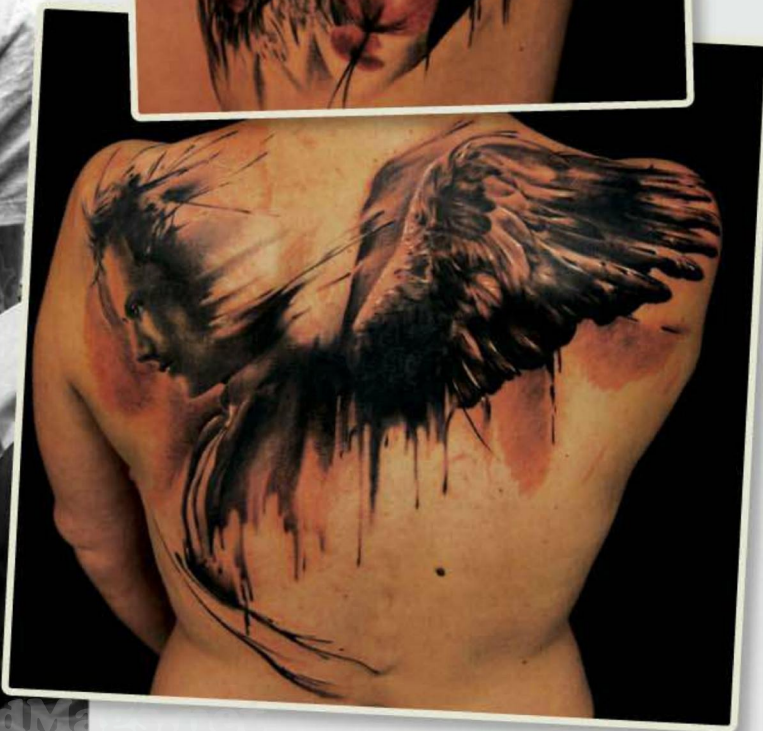
YOUR REALISTIC AND BLACK & GREY WORK IS AMAZING, IS THIS A STYLE YOU'VE BEEN MOST COMFORTABLE WITH FROM THE OFF?

From the very beginning I was fascinated by faces, whether they were real or fantasy, demons or women.

But they've always had some kind of realism about them. It's always a challenge to do a

realistic tattoos. I like to 'fight' with all those details and to see how the tattoo slowly builds up and gets more and more real. I love to do both black & grey and colour tattoos, but black & grey is what I started with and what I like the most. Those tattoos have a really special, unique mood. They are always kind of majestic to me, it's hard to explain. Colour tattoos are my second favourite because you can create one and the same picture in different ways

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING I WAS FASCINATED BY FACES, WHETHER THEY WERE REAL OR FANTASY, DEMONS OR WOMEN. BUT THEY'VE ALWAYS HAD SOME KIND OF REALISM ABOUT THEM





just by changing the colours. You can create different moods and interesting backgrounds, but black & grey portraits will always be my favourite.

ANY OTHER STYLES THAT APPEAL TO YOU?

I do lot of crazy tattoos. There are tattoos that look funny, extremely realistic or whatever, but nowadays there is no real 'crazy'. You can do a fat red cross over a realistic skull, or a mad comic mosquito with eyes bigger than its whole body... you can even tattoo a slaughter scene from a horror movie and it's acceptable. There is no real 'crazy' anymore.

WHERE DO YOU FIND INSPIRATION FOR YOUR WORK?

There are a lot of artists that I admire who are idols, whether they are tattooers, illustrators, painters, or musicians. I get my inspiration from all

of them. I don't really want to state a preference of one over the other, they have all helped... and if I have to write them down it would fill a book, and I'm definitely better doing tattoos than writing books. Tattooing and drawing are the most important things, there's nothing more besides that. This is what makes me happy and satisfied. I love to go on conventions, to make tattoos and to get tattoos.

ANY LAST WORDS TO LEAVE THE READERS WITH?

The tattoos I do are not mine they belong to the customers. I try to do what they would like to have while putting in as much creativity as possible. My goals are to do constantly good work, give the best that I can, and get better and better. My whole focus is on the work and the studio – and probably a house, a wife and kids in a few years. 🐾

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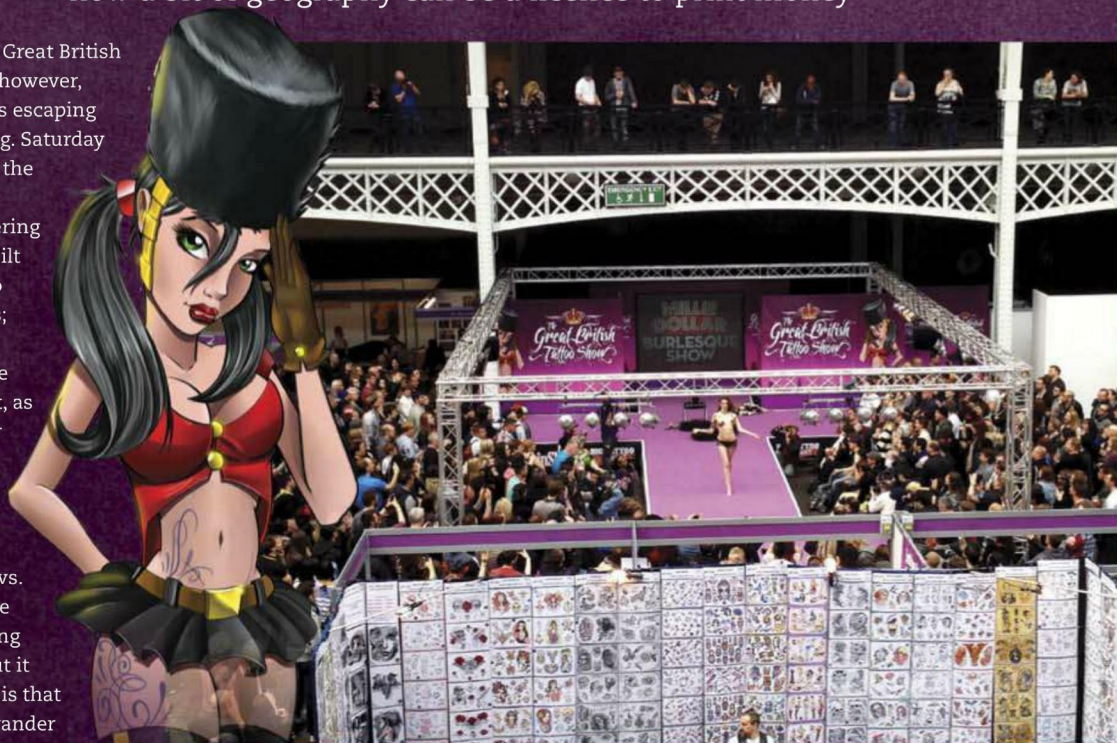
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The Great British Tattoo Show

Somewhere around here, the streets are paved with gold. At least that's what I used to believe all those years ago when I first moved here from Smallville, but such is the story of everybody that comes here trying to escape from themselves. Kensington has a reputation to uphold – one that is currently kept alive solely by the petrol station across the road from our hotel charging £1.94 for a litre of petrol! Somewhere up north, it's still less than £1.30. Amazing how a bit of geography can be a licence to print money

Day one of the Great British Tattoo Show however, and nobody is escaping from anything. Saturday morning kicks off with the rumblings of an ever-increasing crowd gathering around the purpose-built stage to hold the tattoo inspired fashion shows; fire breathers, Cyanide Girls, and whatever else came to be thrown at it, as well as the very dapper and increasingly sardonic Mr Paul Sweeney, who we are always pleased to have comperé our shows. We've never had a stage around which everything else revolved before, but it works. The beauty of it is that no matter where you wander



WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE IS REAL ART - SOME OF IT IS AS GOOD, IF NOT BETTER TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, THAN THE WORK YOU FIND IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY

off to, it will call you back. It's a good meeting place and proved very popular. Yeah, we could say that it was popular for various reasons adorning the pages of this feature, but it's a very cool centrepiece that I have no doubt you'll be seeing time and again now.

This Kensington Olympia lark is quite something. The glass ceiling

was well liked by the tattoo artists positioned directly beneath it. Thankfully, the previously threatened thunderstorm stayed away, otherwise I suspect it may have gone rather dark. Logistically, some of the booths weren't quite so lucky as to have the full force of the sun's rays beaming down on them, but that's something we'll look at for next year. You can't

THE WINNERS SATURDAY

Best Small Black & Grey

Maris Paulo,
Hammersmith Tattoo
Person With Tattoo
Chris Ozo

Best Small Colour

Chantale Coady,
Electric Vintage
Person With Tattoo
Daniel Sinnott

Best Large Colour

Cris Gherman,
Cris Gherman Tattoo
Person With Tattoo
Chaz Farrell

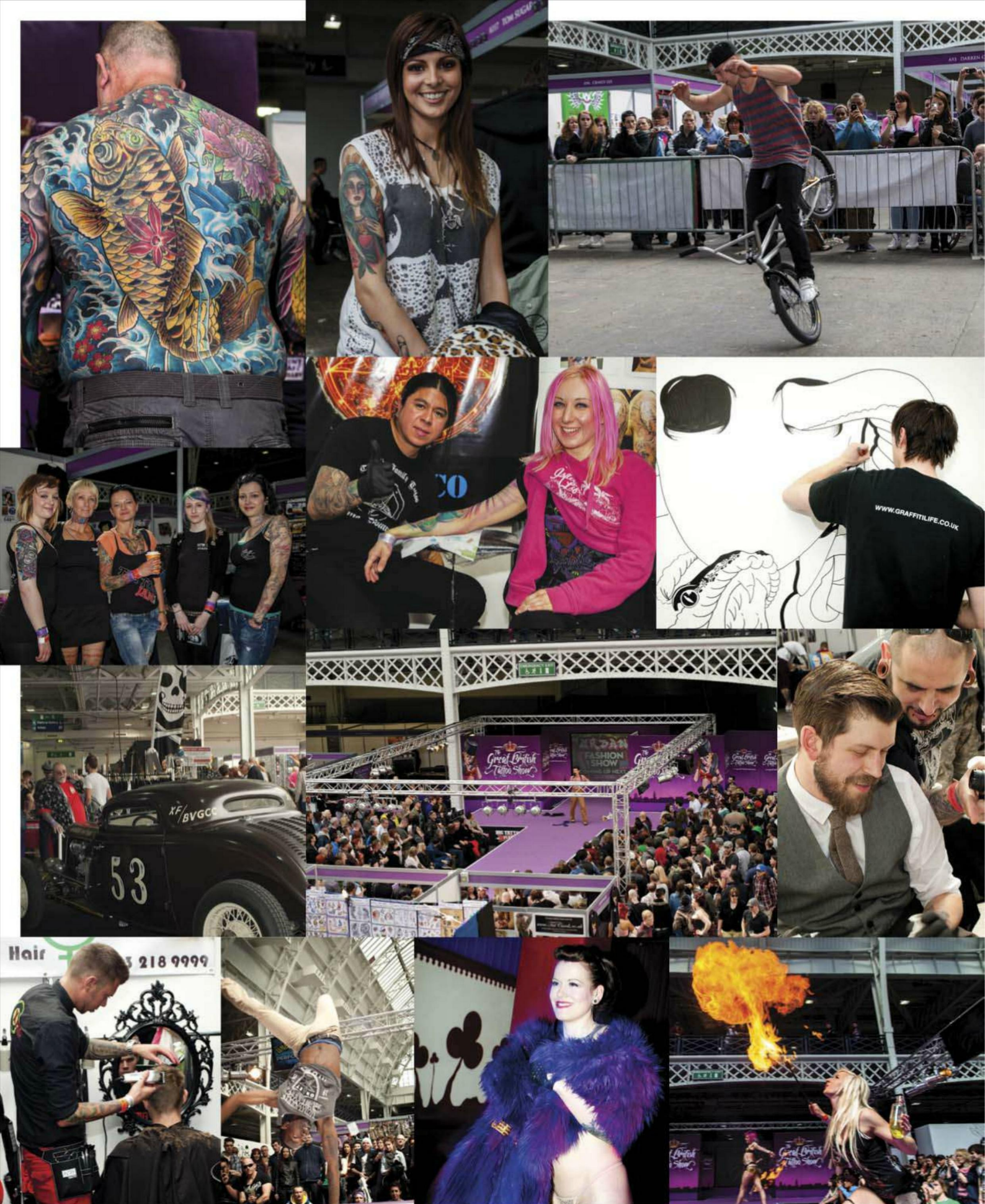
Best Tattoo Completed Saturday

Rakhee Shah
Xotica Tattoo
Person With Tattoo
Duncan Burbridge

beat natural light to work in and that's not something you get everywhere these days. Who are we to turn it away when it makes an appearance?

To the uninitiated, of which there appear to be many of here today, the tattoo still holds all of the mystery it does before you went and got yourself covered. It's nice to see – better still, it's great to have an opportunity to talk to them – particularly this guy I ran into called Greg who was loitering with intent between Mark Bailey's Golden Dragon and Paul Humphries from Evolution who both had their heads down for the foreseeable future. 🌻





"I work in I.T. and that's all I do, but whenever I do get some spare time, I spend it in art galleries. I came here today to see what was on offer and I'm amazed at what these artists are putting on skin." Greg shrugs like he will never really understand how it's done. He is, in truth, one of the most enthusiastic geeks I have ever met. "It's nothing at all like how I thought it would be. What's happening here is real art – some of it is as good, if not better technically speaking, than the work you find in the National Gallery."

Typically, Greg would love to stay and chat as much as I would love to stay and listen, but that Sweeney bloke is announcing with no small amount of gusto (and a microphone) the imminent arrival of the Cyanide Girls. Like he said, Greg has never been to anything like this before. He asks me what a Cyanide Girl is and what one of them might do. Pointing to the power tools littering the stage, I begin my explanation with a reasonably accurate description of what happens when you put metal studs through your bra and pants before setting about them with an angle-grinder. Swiftly, Greg finds a seat not three feet from the stage and whips out one of those crazy tablet sized phones with camera things that might turn into a lifeboat at the weekend. I reckon wherever it is he works in I.T., will have its eyes opened a little more than usual when he gets back. Gotta love those data crunchers.

Meanwhile, over on the other side of the Olympia, the real work is beginning to take shape. I find Sweet Laraine drawing up an octopus – the second I have seen in as many hours – both totally unique. Making a mental note to check it out later, I also find Emil Edge working up a scorpion made up out of old Singer sewing machine parts and determined to get it inked up sometime over the weekend – which it was and it looked just as great as you'd expect from the Edge. Not so far around the corner, Chantale Coady from Electric Vintage is adding some more work to the *Pan's Labyrinth* piece she won an award for back at Tattoo Freeze – this time in the shape of Bowie's *Labyrinth* character, which later wins the Best Portrait on the Saturday; it's only now that I write that down that I see a



I'M PRETTY SURE MOST PEOPLE STILL THINK LIONEL IS JOKING, BUT TEND TO WALK PAST SILENTLY AFRAID TO ANNOUNCE THE FACT THAT THEY 'DON'T GET IT'

THE WINNERS SUNDAY

Best Tribal / Celtic

Tony Unwin
Kirituhi Tattoo
Person With Tattoo
Josh Loach

Best Oriental

Derek Campbell
Ultimate Tattoos
Person With Tattoos
Scott Guildford

Best Portrait

Evo
Wicked Needles
Person With Tattoo
Daiga

Best Chest Piece

Cris Gherman
Chris Gherman
Person With Tattoo
Chaz Farrell

Best Large Black & Grey

Patric Huttlinger
Sakrosankt
Person With Tattoo
Rafal Mordeja

Best Tattoo Completed On Sunday

Johny Domus Mesquita
Domus Tattoo Art
Person With Tattoo
Kurt Wilson

Best Of Convention

Johny Domus Mesquita
Domus Tattoo Art
Person With Tattoo
Kurt Wilson



labyrinth theme appearing. Where to next? Talking of portraits, Rakhee at Xotica pumped out a couple of haymakers over the weekend. The first Dorothy L'Amour and the second, a killer James Dean (also an award winner on the Saturday).

The fun didn't end there. No Sir. My good friends Henrik Gallon 🌸

and Craig Lee made it to the show – and I made some new friends too which is always a bonus. The crew at Hammersmith Tattoo proved themselves to be quite a handful both on and off the stage, but you can't fault their work or drinking ethics. It was also a treat to see that some of the guys from Club Tattoo made it over.

I'm never going to make it through the entire artist list to say thanks (that's why the gods invented websites), but it would be remiss of me not to mention the guys from ABH (even if you can't get to their Ink For Heroes show this year (just send cash in a bag)), Mat and Andy at Creative Vandals who made it as far as a massive double-page spread in the Independent (mums will be pleased with that one), the mighty Zoltan from Doctor Singer (we must catch up real soon), and of course, the brilliant Lionel Fahy whose work simply gets better and better in the weirdest way you can ever imagine. I'm pretty sure most people still think he's joking, but tend to walk past silently afraid to announce the fact that they 'don't get it'.



@Piercer_IANS:

"Really pleased with my tattoo Simon inked on me at The Great British Tattoo show, really amazing"

@writer_mich:

"Had a brilliant time at the @BritishTattoo show yesterday. Had my hair done by #xerohair and bought @skindeepmag, it was well worth going!"

@CyanideGirls1:

"Thanks to everyone that came to the @BritishTattoo show! You were an amazing crowd! If you have any #cyanidegirls pictures email them to us!"

@Millie_Dollar:

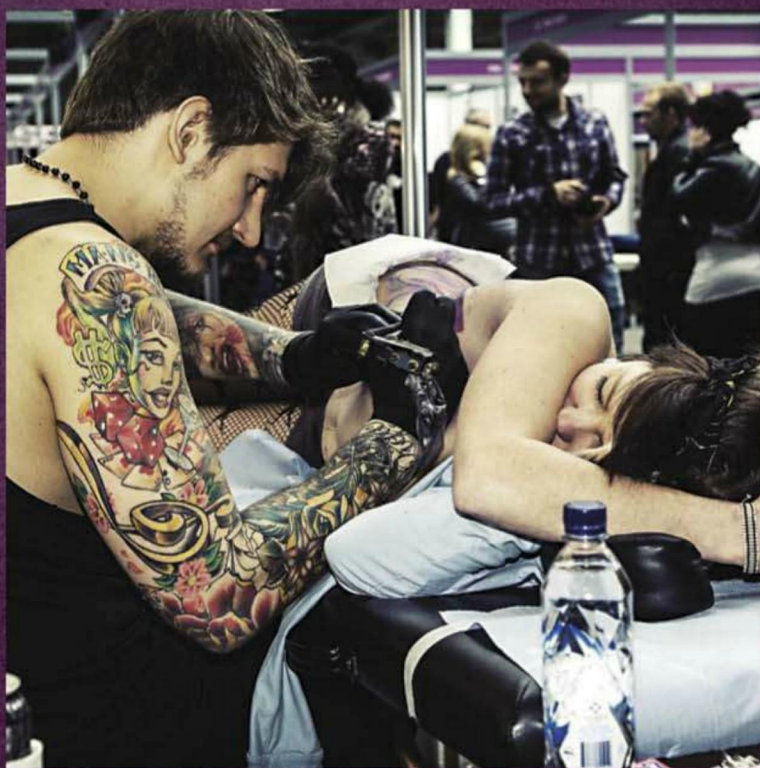
"Exhausted from the weekend and barely sleeping, but @BritishTattoo con was so much fun, and love my new tattoo! <3"

@LauraCloutman:

"Had a fab time @britishtattoo show with @RebeccaBond! Tattoo looks fab"

@OfThatSort:

"Awesome day at the Great British Tattoo Show. Next year I'll actually be able to get a tattoo done!"



WHAT HE ACTUALLY SAID WITH A SMILE THAT SPLIT HIS FACE EAR TO EAR WAS, "WAIT UNTIL THE GUYS AT THE OFFICE GET A LOAD OF THIS!"

A final word on the show itself – fantastic competition entries. Simply being in London certainly adds a whole new dimension to the judging process, so aside from the work done at the show itself, the photo booth got hit with some really great ink, adding some great new styles and nuances that I hadn't seen before.

Towards the end of the weekend, who should I run into again but everybody's favourite data manager, Greg. He was a different man than he was on Saturday morning. Is that a little smear of soot I see on his face from getting a little too close to the Engineers of Desire's final set? Did the nasty tattooed cenobites get a little too close for comfort? It sure looks that way. Not only is his face marked up

with the fire of his desire (I like that... I may use it again later), but there's something different about his entire demeanour. He shows me extreme close-ups on the tablet-phone-portable cinema screen thing of Millie Dollar and Beatrix Von Bourbon and proclaims them both equal

parts hotter than hell. What he actually said with a smile that split his face ear to ear was, "wait until the guys at the office get a load of this!" And was that some taped up cling-wrap I saw sticking out of his T-shirt sleeve? I believe it very well might have been.

Thus, I must announce the death and rebirth of Greg. Yesterday, nothing but a humble data specialist; today Greg is broken beyond repair. How excellent. 🐼

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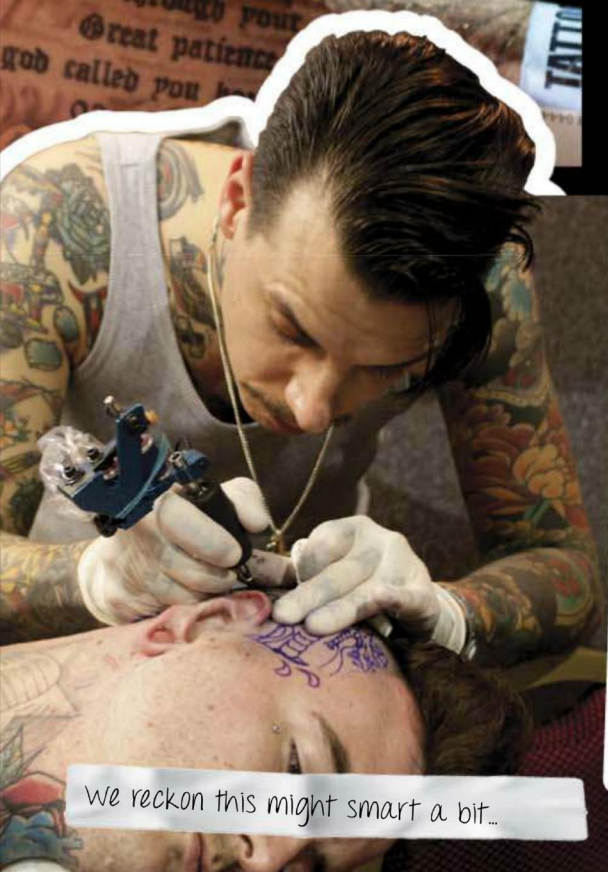
what a cracking tat.

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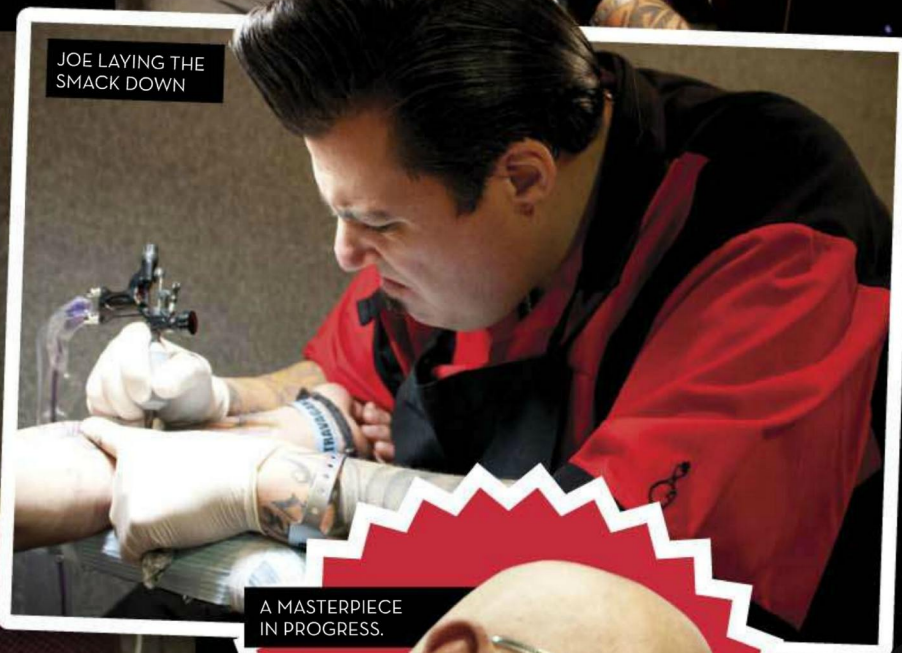
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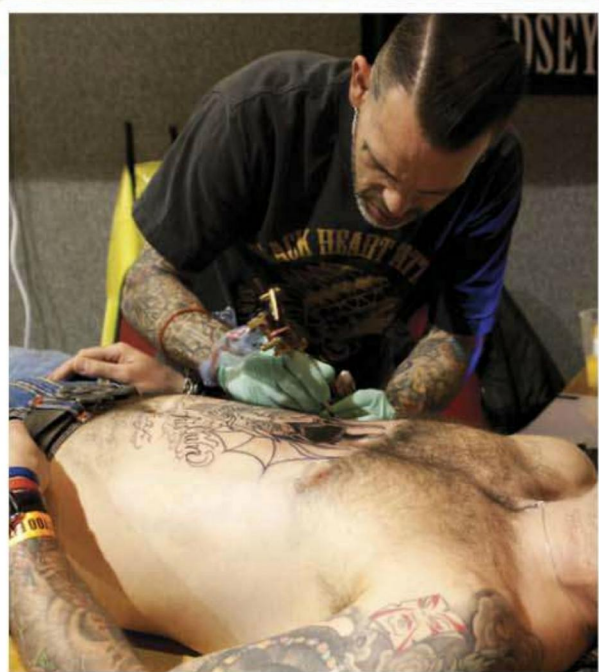
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Female tattoo artist wanted to work in a new studio on the Wirral. Would be self-employed. Min three years studio experience. Able to do custom work and flash - if interested please ring Jason on 07545 534781.

Squidink Tattoo Studio is looking for tattooists to join our busy seaside shop in Folkestone. We are looking for someone with talent and a strong portfolio of tattoos and artwork. All styles are welcome, but Japanese and black and grey realism would be ideal. We preferably need someone with a good client-base and checkable references. We do excellent percentage rates for custom freehand work from established international artists who are looking for a guest spot. To contact us please use our contact page on our website www.squidinktattoo.co.uk, or call rob on his mobile 07905 341968 or shop landline on 01303 211666.

I am an 18-year-old female artist with a major love of ink! I've been looking for an apprenticeship for months now, but I can't find anyone willing to take me on. If there's anyone out there in the Norfolk region willing to help me out, contact me. Email: madmel2000@hotmail.co.uk. Tel: 07530965956.

Talented tattoo artist required to join the team at a new concept tattoo studio opening soon in the West Yorkshire area. Applicants must have studio experience and a portfolio which reflects their attention to detail, desire to work to the highest standards and skills in a variety of styles. No drink, drug or ego problems please. Email your CV and Portfolio to modern.electric.tattoo@hotmail.co.uk.

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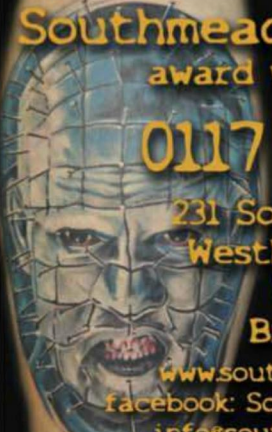


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TRANSITION

Shortly before my grandma turned 85, I asked her about her younger days. So much had changed in her long, 20th century life that I expected to hear tales of how things used to be, but it wasn't the differences that she wanted to talk about.



Paula Hardy Kangelos

Instead, she told me what had remained the same and whispered that she "was still 18 in her head" – fresh, tenacious, full of anticipation and wonder. She said that she hadn't altered at all; it was the world that had changed around her.

Tattoos are for those of us that still feel 18 on the inside regardless of what time does to our outer shells. To be tattooed is to celebrate who you are in the present as it displays the current inner self on the external walls – the body is transforming but only in order to confirm that inside the mind remains the same. Tattoos are only for the resolute.

In a lifetime, a single person can appear to be many different people. It's a tired old cliché, but life is said to be a journey, travelling from birth through teenager to adult. Shakespeare wrote of this transition as seven stages, starting with infant and ending with a second childhood, 'sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything', a circular journey, appearing to end back where it started. Of course, tattooed people are never 'sans everything'. We carry our art to the end of our personal journeys, no matter where they may lead.

When I was quite small I suddenly declared with absolute certainty that I was now a vegetarian. My parents, classic Sunday roast and bacon sandwich people, thought this hilarious; "leave her to it!" they sniggered, "She'll soon change

her mind. Just wait until Sunday/ Shepherd's pie night/ Christmas." Three decades on and I still follow the dietary rules I decided upon as an infant. So perhaps it's understandable that I have no qualms regarding my decision to become tattooed, after all, there is little that we know as well as ourselves, and altering the outer to match the inner is simply an act of revelation, not of change.

As a child, the tattoos I knew were wrapped with bubblegum or faded on

IN A LIFETIME A SINGLE PERSON CAN APPEAR TO BE MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE

the forearms of old men that smelt of Vicks and hair oil. Back then I was a daughter, a village hall ballerina, a fairy that fell off the garden wall – my primary school report declared me able, but in need of a 'calmer approach to life', it wasn't long before it was goodbye to girl guides and hello to goths. We start off as the fruit from the tree of our parents; we dress up in their clothes and listen to (and scratch) their records, imagining a future where we are just like them. Soon though, we seek to find our very own selves, and so we set ourselves up in opposition to our folks – we wear stupid shoes and sport ridiculous hairstyles that dare our elders to criticise, but all we are really trying to say is, "I am not you."

Our parents explain away our behaviour, call it a 'phase', and wait for the clumsy rebellion to fade into more acceptable separations, perhaps

university, marriage or children of our own. However, in some, the passion does not pale. We do not change or mellow, but continue to define ourselves through oppositions and alignments, forever remaining 18 in our heads.

Recently, Tom Gabel – extensively tattooed person and singer of punk band Against Me! – hit the mainstream news after coming out as transgendered in a magazine interview. Gabel now plans on beginning the long labour of physically transitioning from male to female. This transformative journey echoes the one that Gabel has already travelled in becoming tattooed, indeed, they both lead

to the same destination; an external self that is an authentic presentation of the true, inner self,

her mind, remains the same. It's not a journey of transformation, but rather, one of confirmation.

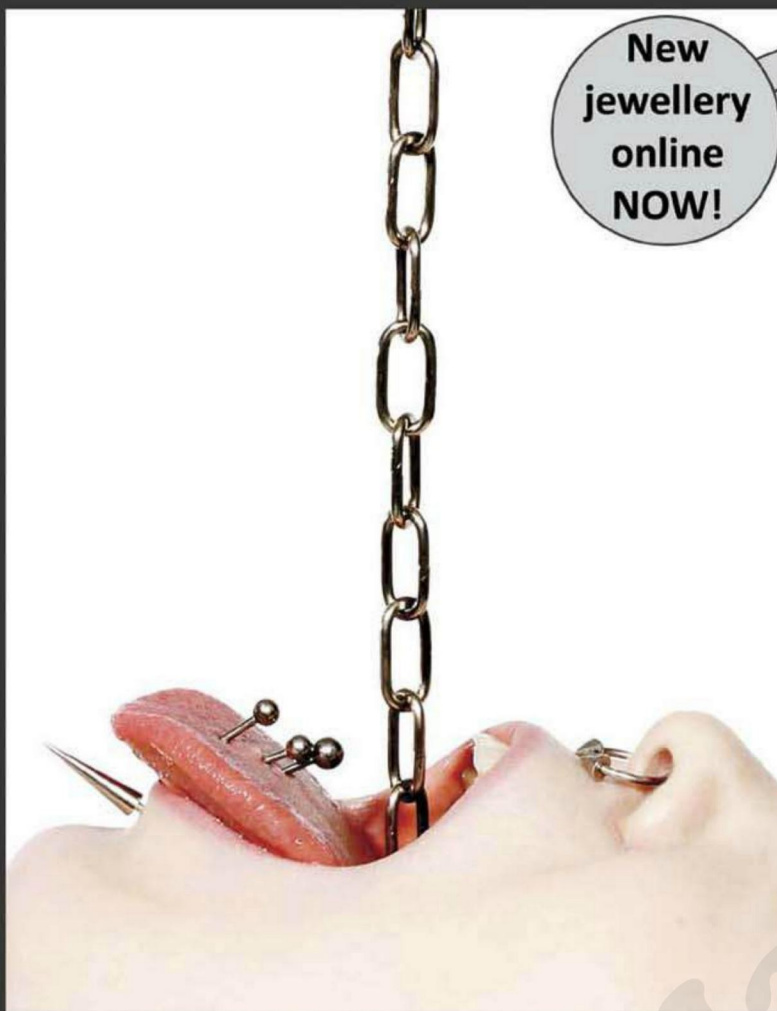
Often, when I meet someone for the first time, they make a great deal of how they love my tattoos, but then reel off myriad reasons as why they'd never have a tattoo themselves. The famous saying, "The only difference between tattooed people and non-tattooed people is that tattooed people don't care if you don't have a tattoo" is almost true. But it's not that I don't care, it's more that I already know why they don't have tattoos, it's simply because they don't already have a tattooed person's inside.

So Mrs. Raleigh, primary school teacher circa 1984, I'd like to take this opportunity to let you know that I never did cultivate that calmer attitude to life. Instead, I've inscribed my predilection for passion on my skin. Thanks anyway! 🐾



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